

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

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CHRISTMAS-DAY.

How will it dawn, the coming Christmas-day ?
 A northern Christmas, such as painters love,
 And kinsfolk, shaking hands but once a year,
 And dames who tell old legends by the fire ?
 Red sun, blue sky, white snow, and pearly ice,
 Keen ringing air, which sets the blood on fire,
 And makes the old man merry with the young,
 Through the short sunshine, through the longer
 night ?

Or southern Christmas, dark and dank with
 mist,
 And heavy with the scent of steaming leaves,
 And rose-buds mouldering on the dripping
 porch ;
 One twilight, without rise or set of sun,
 Till beetles drone along the hollow lane,
 And round the leafless hawthorns, flitting bats
 Hawk the pale moths of winter ? Welcome
 then,
 At best, the flying gleam, the flying shower,
 The rain-pools glittering on the long white
 roads,
 And shadows sweeping on from down to down
 Before the salt Atlantic gale : yet come
 In whatsoever garb, or gay, or sad,
 Come fair, come foul, 'twill still be Christmas-
 day.

How will it dawn, the coming Christmas-day,
 To sailors lounging on the lonely deck
 Beneath the rushing trade-wind ? Or to him,
 Who by some noisome harbour of the East,
 Watches awart arms roll down the precious
 bales,

Spoils of the tropic forests ; year by year
 Amid the din of heathen voices, groaning
 Himself half heathen ? How to those — brave
 hearts !

Who toil with laden loins and sinking stride
 Beside the bitter wells of treeless sands
 Toward the peaks which flood the ancient Nile,
 To free a tyrant's captives ? How to those —
 New patriarchs of the new-found underworld —
 Who stand, like Jacob, on the virgin lawns,
 And count their flocks' increase ? To them
 that day

Shall dawn in glory, and solstitial blaze
 Of full midsummer sun : to them that morn
 Gay flowers beneath their feet, gay birds aloft
 Shall tell of nought but summer : but to them,
 Ere yet, unwarred by carol or by chime,
 They spring into the saddle, thrills may come
 From that great heart of Christendom which
 beats

Round all the worlds ; and gracious thoughts of
 youth ;
 Of steadfast folk, who worship God at home ;
 Of wise words, learnt beside their mothers' knee ;
 Of innocent faces, upturned once again
 In awe and joy to listen to the tale
 Of God made man, and in a manger laid :
 May soften, purify, and raise the soul
 From selfish cares, and growing lust of gain,
 And phantoms of this dream, which some call
 life,

Toward the eternal facts ; for here or there,
 Summer or winter, 'twill be Christmas-day.

Blest day, which aye reminds us, year by
 year,
 What 'tis to be a man : to curb and spurn
 The tyrant in us : that ignobler self
 Which boasts, not loathes, its likeness to the
 brute,
 And owns no good save ease, no ill save pain,
 No purpose, save its share in that wild war
 In which, through countless ages, living things
 Compete in internecine greed. — Ah God !
 Are we as creeping things, which have no Lord ?
 That we are brutes, great God, we know too
 well :

Apes daintier-featured ; silly birds, who flaunt
 Their plumes, unheeding of the fowler's step ;
 Spiders, who catch with paper, not with webs ;
 Tigers, who slay with cannon and sharp steel,
 Instead of teeth and claws ; — all these we are.
 Are we no more than these, save in degree ?
 No more than these ; and born but to compete —
 To envy and devour, like beast or herb ;
 Mere fools of nature ; puppets of strong lusts,
 Taking the sword, to perish with the sword
 Upon the universal battle-field,
 Even as the things upon the moor outside ?

The heath eats up green grass and delicate
 flowers ;

The pine eats up the heath, the grub the pine,
 The finch the grub, the hawk the silly finch ;
 And man, the mightiest of all beasts of prey,
 Eats what he lists : — the strong eat up the
 weak,

The many eat the few ; great nations, small ;
 And he who cometh in the name of all
 Shall, greediest, triumph by the greed of all ;
 And, armed by his own victims, eat up all ;
 While ever out of the eternal heavens
 Looks patient down the great magnanimous
 God,

Who, Maker of all worlds, did sacrifice
 All to himself. Nay, but himself to one ;
 Who taught mankind on that first Christmas-
 day,

What 'twas to be a man : to give, not take ;
 To serve, not rule ; to nourish, not devour ;
 To help, not crush ; if need, to die, not live.
 Oh, blessed day, which givest the eternal lie
 To self, and sense, and all the brute within ;
 Oh, come to us, amid this war of life ;
 To hall and hovel, come ; to all who toil
 In senate, shop, or study ; and to those
 Who, sundered by the wastes of half a world,
 Ill-warred, and sorely tempted, ever face
 Nature's brute powers, and men unmanned to
 brutes.

Come to them, blest and blessing, Christmas-
 day

Tell them once more the tale of Bethlehem ;
 The kneeling shepherds, and the Babe Divine ;
 And keep them men indeed, fair Christmas-day.

From Good Words.

"**ECCE HOMO.**"*

PART L

BY THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

No anonymous book, since the "Vestiges of Creation" (now more than twenty years old)—indeed, it might almost be said no theological book, whether anonymous or of certified authorship—that has appeared within the same interval, has attracted anything like the amount of notice and of criticism which have been bestowed upon the remarkable volume entitled "Ecce Homo."

Probably we should have to travel much further back in order to find a work which having drawn forth commendation so warm, and censure so sharp, had both acquired the one and incurred the other from the most directly opposite quarters. The fact, however, is undisputed, and the instances familiar enough: and the phenomenon admits, perhaps, of some explanation, though it may perhaps be a partial explanation only. On the one hand, it is plain that the author repeatedly uses language which could not consistently be employed in treating of Christianity from what is termed the orthodox point of view; and the offence which many have taken on this account has, in such cases unhappily, put a dead stop to any real investigation of the work in its general bearings. Or if the process has been continued, yet a determined adhesion to fixed and unelastic modes of thought has made it so repulsive, as to insure its ending in thorough-paced condemnation. On the other hand, what is loosely called society, and is represented by the literature, if not of the age, yet of the moment, has been making of late much of what may be termed proud flesh; a sign of ungoverned effort, and of life indeed, but of somewhat crude and disordered life. Into this tissue of proud flesh the work cuts, perhaps more deeply than any other production of recent years; not by direct insertion of the knife, but by bringing home to the reader's mind, with a wonderful force and freshness, this impression, that there is something or other called the Gospel, which, whatever it be, as was said by an old poet of the divinity, has very strong, and what may even turn out to be very formidable, claims not merely on the intellectual condescension, but on the loyal allegiance and humble obedience of man-

kind. To drive home this impression to the heart and mind of the nineteenth century, now already grown elderly and growing old, disturbs the self-complacency of a mind determined upon comfort, and naturally enough constitutes a grave offence in the views of those to whom the chequered but still noble fabric of actual Christianity, still casting its majestic light and shadow over the whole civilized world, is a rank eyesore, and an intolerable grievance.

This offence, serious in itself, is attended with aggravating circumstances. There is a tone of familiarity, to say the least, at the outset of the volume, and particularly in the preface, which naturally tends to raise hopes that the history of Him to whom so many lands, and so many ages, have bowed the knee, is to receive a very free handling. And, indeed, the author, it is observed, actually by implication calls himself a critic. He apparently proposes "to accept those conclusions about Christ, not which church doctors or even apostles have sealed with their authority, but which the facts themselves, *critically weighed*, appear to warrant." And yet this "critic," forsooth, we by-and-by discover, does not conform to the first law of theological criticism, which seems to be with many not far from this: that every question of history or creed, hitherto held affirmatively, and now admitted to examination, is to be determined in the negative. Or more pointedly, he does not conform to the canon which Dr. Strauss lays down as a postulate, if not an axiom, in his "Life of Christ composed for the German People,"* where we have the following proposition: "A personality, which on one side indeed is of a man, but on the other a being of higher order, a God or Son of God, and which, though born of a human mother, is begotten of no human father, such an object we hand over to fable and to poetry, but never think of making it the theme of a serious historical treatment." This staggering proposition our author does not adopt: nay, he believes in miracles, or at least has registered no vow to disbelieve them. Now this seems like taking the shibboleth of a party, and then turning out no better than a traitor in the camp. In fine, to the absolutely stereotyped forms both of faith and scepticism, to the "high and dry" believer, and to the "high and dry" non-believer, the author of "Ecce Homo" has been a most unacceptable visitant, for ap-

* "Ecce Homo: a Survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ." 8vo. Macmillan & Co. 1866.

* "Das Leben Jesu für das Deutsche Volk bearbeitet." Von D. F. Strauss. 2 Auflage, Leipzig, 1864. P. 1.

parently he has caused to both a good deal of vague perturbation.

This, however, as has been said, is but a partial explanation, especially as regards the objector on the side of orthodoxy. To him in particular this volume, quite apart from those occasional offences (as we will call them) of language that have already been mentioned, delivers a most serious challenge. Undoubtedly it exhibits the character of our Lord on the human side. It purports to show, and it actually shows, Him as a man : and it leaves us to see, through the fair curtain of His manhood, what we may. The objection taken to this mode of treatment, in substance, perhaps amounts to this : that our Saviour is not a mere man, but is God made man ; and that he ought not to be exhibited in any Christian work as a man only, but as God and man. And justice compels us to add that those who challenge the author of "Ecce Homo" on this ground are not always persons whose judgment can be summarily put aside on the score of bigotry and blindness.

Now, as to the matter of fact, the simple question, namely, whether this writer exhibits our Saviour as man only, let the objector, at any rate for argument's sake, have his way. It is plain that, to say the least, the human aspect so predominates in this volume, as to be at first sight almost the only one. But on the rights of the case, as distinguished from the bare matter of fact, there is much to be said. It is very difficult, it is, humanly speaking, almost impossible, to maintain a just balance, together with a close union, between two ideas of such immense disparity as God and man : the wailing infant, and the supreme Creator : the Victim of Death, and the Lord of Death : the despised of all, and the Judge of all. Heresy from an early date cut the heart of this difficulty by denying the divinity of Christ. The Christian Church, with its force undivided, and its attention concentrated on subjects of controversy which then were as conspicuously few as they were profoundly vital, did indeed make good for itself a clear and solid theological standing-ground, in strict correspondence with the idea of an Emmanuel, or God with us. But the student of ecclesiastical history, or even the mere cursory inspector of the records of a few of the councils of the fourth century, knows that it was not until after many a fearful, and even what, to human eyes, might seem many a giddy reel, that a nearly unanimous Christendom settled down upon a centre of gravity in doctrinal expression, which has been per-

fectly stable through all the vicissitudes of fifteen hundred years, and which to all appearance nothing can now shake, except there come a shock under which all definite Christianity shall crumble. This combined belief in the divinity and humanity of Christ has survived the impact and strain of all the convulsive forces which rent East from West, or as the Eastern Christians would, with more show of reason, say, West from East ; which then broke off from the great Western mass so many integral parts of its articulated structure ; and which have profoundly disorganized so much even of what they did not actually sever. Yet it is very difficult for the subjective Christianity of individuals, or even for systems, to maintain with precision the equilibrium which has been so laboriously won for its members by the action of the early church. In the Roman communion it has long seemed to observers from without, as if much of what belonged to the humanity of Christ in the first forms of Christian belief, and according to the common creeds, were virtually intercepted by devotion primarily addressed to intermediate objects, and too often apt to rest there. In England, and, as some think, still more in Scotland, there is on the other hand a tendency among imperfectly informed Christians practically to merge the humanity in the divinity of our Lord, to underrate or overlook its continued existence and action, in some cases even to suppose that it terminated with the theophany, or manifestation of the Divine Person in the flesh.

If this be so, then, perhaps, on the part of a book like "Ecce Homo," it may be right to retort a friendly expostulation, and to intreat objectors to consider with themselves whether their impatience of a detailed picture of our Lord in his humanity is really so unequivocal a sign of orthodoxy as they suppose ; or whether, on the contrary, it may rather be a token that the religious mind among us has, from want of habitual cultivation, grown dry and irreceptive on that side of the Christian creed, so that the kind of writing which they encounter with rebuke and suspicion is the very kind which is needed to bring us back to the full vigour of that mixed conception of the character and person of our Lord, which in reality forms, according to the acknowledgment of nearly all communions of the Christian name, the central idea of the Christian system.

It may, however, be further said, and it may even be true, that the author of "Ecce Homo" does not throughout handle the

subject of our Saviour's humanity with the care and caution of language which would be observed, and ought to be observed, by a sound believer, not to say by a trained theologian. And this form of the indictment brings us at length near, by the reply which it suggests, to that which, speaking without any special information, and merely using the materials of judgment which the work supplies, we should take to be the true position of the writer, and the legitimate office of the work.

In his brief preface the author of "Ecce Homo" has informed us that he wrote it for the satisfaction of his own mind. The work then was the work of one who felt his way, and made his road as he went along; it was a tentative work, and a tentative work can ill afford to be judged by the rules applicable to one which is didactic. The didactic writer is in possession when he begins of all the knowledge with which he ends; the tentative writer gathers as he goes. The first is bound by the same rules all along; the other enlarges the scope of his vision at each step he makes, and may naturally and justifiably have employed language and assumed a tone when he commenced his labours which would be unbecoming from the more advanced position that he occupies at the close. Nor ought he of necessity to go back upon and recast his diction, so as to give himself one colour and one attitude from first to last; for if he did so he would be likely to efface from his composition those lineaments of truth and nature on which its effect as a whole might in great measure depend. For in such a work, which is essentially a work of self-education, that which, above all things, the reader ought to see is the progression of effect, which the study of the subject, exhibited in the composition of the book, has had upon the mind of the writer. He should be placed in a position to measure with some accuracy the distance between his author's point of departure and point of arrival; and, in order that he may do this, he must know the actual whereabouts of the one as well as of the other. Now the very language by which the author of "Ecce Homo" has, it may be, pained or startled the minds of numerous readers, may perhaps be no more than a true index of the unformed but upright state of mind in which he addressed himself to a subject never it would seem effectually brought home to his understanding through those channels of tradition and authority which with most of us have been the earliest, and with some it may be feared the only, ave-

nues of access for the Christian religion to our intellects as well as to our hearts.

I ought perhaps to ask pardon from this most able and honourable writer for the freedom of these assumptions, which cannot plead as their warrant any knowledge except such as has been derived from the pages of the work itself. Yet, whether they are in themselves excusable or not, they may, at least, have the effect of accrediting the acknowledgments of obligation, and the professions of admiration by which they will in the main be followed.

The chief objection, then, which is thought to lie against this work from the side of the ancient Christian belief is, that it exhibits our Lord in His human nature, or on the human side of His person only. And, as has been observed, probably those who urge this objection would follow it up by urging that the "word of truth" is to be "rightly divided," that the several parts of religion ought to be exhibited in their due proportions, that the severance of its limbs is fatal to its vitality, that the license to teach half-truths is all that Falsehood can desire, and that, in point of fact, all the havoc made by Error has been effected by the use of this very method.

Now the answer to this reasoning, so far as it is of a general character, appears to be obvious enough. The teaching of half-truths is, indeed, indefensible and mischievous, when they are taught as whole truths. But there is an order and succession in the process of instruction; and that which is not good as a resting-place may be excellent and most necessary as a stage in an onward journey. It was not at the commencement of His career, but it was on the very evening of His passion that our Lord himself was pleased to say to His disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." * Indeed, the negation of this principle would throw every established method of acquiring knowledge into confusion, and if enforced and persevered in would condemn the human understanding to a hopeless and imbecile sterility. For the doctrine that all the parts of a subject must be presented at once can only be reduced to practice by excluding from view all that is really elevated and advanced, by dwelling perpetually in the circle of the merest rudiments, and by presenting even these rudiments in forms which are at once extravagant and stunted.

Let us allow, then, that the author of

* John xvi. 12.

"Ecce Homo" approaches the character of our Saviour on its human side exclusively. This may sound as nearly an equivalent to exhibiting our Lord only in His human nature. The difference between the two will presently, perhaps, become more visible. For the present it may be enough to deal with the objection only in the first-named of these two forms. When so stated, the assertion it involves may be true. But the grave question remains, is it really a just objection? Can no work which confines itself to approaching the character of our Saviour on its human side, have its just and proper office in the Christian teaching of this or of any period of Christian experience? Or would it be too bold to assert, in direct opposition to such an opinion, that, while such a mode of treatment is open to no insurmountable preliminary objection, it is one eminently suited to the religious exigencies of the present times? Further still. If it be well accommodated to the needs of the time in which we live, does it purchase that accommodation by the sacrifice of anything which more permanent needs would require? Does it involve a departure from the spirit of the original and great *evangelium* of the Gospels themselves? Nay, does it involve a departure from their very form?

In order to answer these questions aright, we must humbly endeavour to consider what was, in fact, according to the Gospels, the mode and process of manifestation chosen in order to open up the bosom of that which St. Paul so freely describes as "the mystery" of God, and to introduce to the world that Messiah for whom not only the pious and the worldly among the Hebrews, each according to his own conception, were in active longing, but whom, as we know from heathen sources, "an ancient and constant opinion rise throughout the East" taught even the common run of men to expect.

For this was no light question. No question of a meteor flitting or flaring across the sky, mounting in glare, and then descending into gloom. No question of an appeal to the rough-and-ready strength of passions and of prejudices, which, evoked and organized with skill, might have changed the surface, but the surface only, of society. The astounding fact of the manifestation of the Lord of Glory in the veil of human flesh may, and does, stagger in some minds the whole faculty of belief. Those minds, however, guided by equity, will admit that if this great Christian postulate be sound, much must follow from it. For then we

must in reason expect to find, not only an elaborate preparation in the outer world for an event which, by the very statement of the terms, dwarfs the dimensions of every other known transaction, but likewise a most careful adjustment of the means by which, being so vast in itself, it could find entrance into the human mind and heart. The religion of Christ had to adapt itself to the least as well as to the largest forms of our life and nature, while its central idea was in very truth of such a largeness, in comparison to all we are or can be, as to make the absolute distance between the greatest of human greatness, and the smallest of human littleness, sink into insignificance. No more in the inner than in the outer sphere did Christ come among us as a conqueror, making his appeal to force. We were neither to be consumed by the heat of the Divine presence, nor were to be dazzled by its brightness. God was not in the storm, nor in the fire, nor in the flood, but He was in the still small voice. This vast treasure was not only to be conveyed to us, and to be set down as it were at our doors; it was to enter into us, to become part of us, and that part which should rule the rest; it was to assimilate alike with the mind and heart of every class and description of men. While, as a moral system, it aimed at an entire dominion in the heart, this dominion was to be founded upon an essential conformity to the whole of our original and true essence. It therefore recognized the freedom of man, and respected his understanding, even while it absolutely required him both to learn and to unlearn so largely; the whole of the new lessons were founded upon principles that were based in the deepest and best regions of his nature, and that had the sanction of his highest faculties in their moments of calm, and in circumstances of impartiality. The work was one of restoration, of return, and of enlargement, not of innovation. A space was to be bridged over, and it was vast: but all the piers, and every foundation stone of the connecting structure were to be laid in the reason and common sense, in the history and experience, of man.

This movement, then, was to be a revolutionary movement, but only in the sense of a return from anarchy to order — it was to reconstitute society upon that principle of obedience to the great Father, and of correspondence with His will, which had been almost effaced from the high places and from the outer aspect of the world, and too sorely impaired, even when it lingered here and there in some shadowy retreat. But

while, in this sense, revolutionary as to its aim, it was under the strictest restraint as to its means. It was tender, careful, and considerate of all that it found in the world, neither "breaking the bruised reed," nor "quenching the smoking flax," respecting so much of it as had any title to respect, and enduring with much patience, "for the hardness of their hearts," all such evils as could only have been removed at the cost of introducing greater evils.

These conditions of progress were sufficiently severe. But even these were not all. Provision had to be made not only for establishing aright the relation of Christianity to the world which it was to conquer, but for the subsequent regulation and due balance of the internal forces by which the new community was to live and work. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ." The basis of the kingdom of God was to lie in Emmanuel, God with us, God made man, God in a human form, assumed and worn for our sakes. Now, this idea was not a new one. We know that it was not new to the Jew, from the written promises and narratives of the Book of Genesis; from the fourth figure that moved in the fire with the three children; from the strain of prophecy; and from the oral tradition of the Jews. Neither was it new to the Gentile. The old mythology of Greece, casting off the worship of the elements to the right, and animal worship to the left, had for its central figure, in a carnal way, that very idea which the Gospel was to revive in a Christian way — namely, what is called anthropomorphism, or the humanizing of its gods, with the counterpart of an equally established deification of its heroes. This close union of the two worlds and the two natures had supplied the Greek poets with the chief part of their materials, and had been the inspiring principle of Greek art. Now, the fact that both Jew and Gentile were, each in his own way, supplied with a form ready made (so to speak) in the mind, into which the idea of a Divine Deliverer clad in the flesh might drop, while on the one hand it gave a facility, on the other hand certainly constituted a danger, to the infant religion. For the rule itself by which all was to be measured had gone awry — that form or matrix was itself deformed, and in receiving the idea was but too likely to deprave and distort it.

This was so in the case of the Jew, because with him Divine dispensations were regarded as fundamentally national; and, inasmuch as the foot of the Roman was on

his neck, the first and leading characteristic in his idea of the deliverance to be wrought by the Messiah would naturally be deliverance from the Roman supremacy; restoration to that political liberty which the Jew of our Lord's time — not the exceptional, but the ordinary Jew, not the Simeon or the Nathanael, but the Annas or the Caiaphas — so incurably believed to be his birth-right, that he was able while claiming as his own a history which contradicted him in every page, to boast before our Lord "we were never the slaves of any man." There was a danger that, acting in this sense, and accepting the Gospel thus conceived, the Jews would at once go, as it is well known that the popular fanaticism with one or more false Messiahs did go, into fierce collision with the Roman power. In this way not only would the new religion have been exposed to an unequal contest of physical strength with the one great power of the world, but it would have been placed in an entirely false position from the outset as a kingdom of this world, appealing to force and not to reason for its means of rule. It may then be said without presumption that a necessity of the highest kind existed to make provision against that perversion of the great Gospel idea among its Jewish recipients which, to the vulgar eye, to the eye of the great as well as the little vulgar, would have seemed to be its acceptance, but which would in reality have been its utter deprivation and corruption.

For reasons entirely different, a process not less ruinous had to be guarded against in the case of the Gentile. The theanthropic idea, the idea of God made man without ceasing to be God, was, as I have said, familiar and, indeed, fundamental to the old mythology. But the old mythology, which was sadly corrupt and sadly corrupting even while it continued to be a religion, had in the days of our Saviour ceased to be a religion at all. This proposition must be received with some, but not great, restraint. Not only under the gross outer husk of an idolatry covering a land is it conceivable that there may be in the individual mind kernels of residuary belief and of humble obedience, but also, when even an idolatrous system has ceased to be real for a community at large, yet with respect to smouldering sparks of a true religious fire, if we are unable to affirm that they will still exist, neither must we venture to deny that they may. But, as regarded the mind and thought of man at the period of the advent of Christ, it is probably little beyond the most literal truth to say the old

mythology had in the time of Tiberius Cæsar ceased to exist as a religion. The Roman letters and philosophy of that date appear to leave no room for doubt on the subject. But if this were so, and when along with this there still abode in the world the speculative idea of manifestations of God in human form, associated at every point, as in the later shapes of the mythology it was associated, with every thing most foul and loathsome, how terrible would have been the consequences if the tidings of this new and greater Epiphany of a Divine Person had gone forth, so to speak, prematurely, that is to say, if our Lord had found his way, as under the all-admitting system of Roman policy He would have found his way, into the catalogue of accepted divinities, before the deep and strong and even stern lines had been effectually drawn, which were to fix an impassable gulf between Christianity and the virulent corruptions that were now in the very heart's core of the popular system, and that it came to subdue and to extirpate. It may indeed be said with truth that the Crucifixion would have been a stumbling-block in the way of such reception as has been here supposed. This is probably true. That scratched caricature which was drawn upon the wall of a vault or chamber of the Palatine Hill in Rome, and by which some Pagan soldier probably mocked the faith of a Christian comrade, illustrates, more aptly than could any commentary, the declaration of the Apostle that Christ *crucified* was to the Greeks (and the Greeks at this period in every question of mind led, and therefore represent, the Romans) foolishness. But the falsified idea of an incarnate God, to which reference has been made, might, with the full and glorious list of the signs and wonders that He did, long before the end even of our Lord's brief course, have gone forth into the world, and, by its seeming coincidence with the old and first thought of the Hellenic mythology, have worked an inextricable confusion, an irreparable mischief.

Thus, then, the period of our Lord's coming, though it was in many points a period of advanced civilisation, was one at which the world was dark, very dark, in regard to what constitutes either the abstract truth or the practical form of a religion. The pupil of the general eye was contracted; and it had to be trained by truth and care to admit the light: most of all, to be trained so to admit it, that the light, after being admitted, should not

become darkness, for "great would have been that darkness."

These ideas, however, as I have stated them, are anticipations only, or showings forth of what — with a view to the utmost purity and durability — Christianity behoved to be. Such anticipations are of little moment in comparison with the facts, or unless supported by them. In speaking of the facts, I mean simply the facts as represented in the Gospels. Possibly the language used by the author of "Ecce Homo," in his preface, may have created, and also may even have warranted, an expectation that he was about to undertake an examination of the external evidence, and of the critical evidence generally, for their authenticity and genuineness. It implies no disparagement of that sphere of labour, or of those who have worked, or who work in it, to assert that there is another sphere or office quite distinct from it, and perfectly legitimate. It is to weigh, not the credentials of the messenger, but the nature of the message; to leave for a moment to others the seal and superscription, and to take a glance at the contents; to inquire what may be the moral and practical evidences of truth which they bear upon their front. And I cannot but presume to think that this is a business exceedingly important even in its critical aspect. For the intrinsic nature of the documents, and of the lessons to be derived from them, may in itself supply the most powerful testimony with regard to their authorship and authority, or may, on the other hand, leave or disclose a gap in that testimony difficult or even impossible to be filled.

It is well, however, to remove out of the way a preliminary barrier in the way of a right approach to the question how the character of our Saviour is exhibited to us in the Gospels. In this country, amidst an infinitude of real blessings and solid privileges, we have also a fair, and perhaps rather a full, proportion of palpable counterfeits, and of assumptions that will not bear the application of a moment's thought. For example, because, through the mercy of Providence, we have a perfectly free access to Holy Scripture, we comfortably assume that we are in fact well acquainted with the sacred pages. And with this we join another assumption, scarcely less comfortable — namely, that, being thus familiar with the Bible, we have had and have no concern with tradition, which, for us, is supposed to have no existence. But we little know the breadth of meaning that lies

in the word, or the relation in which we each and all stand to it. The truth is, that we are all of us *traditioners* in a degree much greater than we think. Few, indeed, are there among us whose religious belief and system has actually been formed either from Scripture as a whole, or even from that limited and singularly precious portion of it with which alone we are at this moment concerned. What we suppose to be from Scripture is really, as a general rule, from the catechism, or the schoolmaster, or the preacher, or the school of thought in immediate contact with which we have been brought up; or, perhaps, it has come from the pastor or from the parent, and in some happy cases by the living and affectionate contact of mind with mind. But even then it has been tradition; that is to say, the delivery by them to us of truth in a form in which they possessed it, and in a form which they deemed the best for us. Now suppose they were right in the choice of that form: it does not follow that what is now the best for us, after Christianity has been rooted in the world for nearly two thousand years, was also the best shape and the best order of instruction for those to whom it was a novelty, and who were to be its first propagators, as well as its first receivers.

Even within the compass of the New Testament we see the Christian system presented in various stages of development by its various books, to those for whom they were originally intended. One of these, the earliest, is exhibited to us by the three first, or, as they are now commonly and conveniently termed, the Synoptical Gospels. Another by the Acts of the Apostles — a book in which we find our religion advanced to the stage of corporate or collective action. We find here the first form of that great society, the Church, which, under the name of the Kingdom of Heaven, our Lord had Himself, not established, but predicted. The two remaining stages are represented by the Gospel of St. John and the apostolical Epistles respectively. As between these it is not now necessary to consider the question of priority. The one may be regarded as crowning the Synoptical Gospels, and the other the Acts of the Apostles. For the apostolical Epistles, together with the Apocalypse, both exhibit in detail the nature and workings of the Christian society, and supply the most comprehensive model of practical instruction which was given by the earliest and greatest fathers of the Church.

The Gospel of St. John, on the other hand, supplies a fourth biography of our

Lord. It was certainly given to the Church, according to the general judgment of Christendom, after the three other Gospels; and it also presents the teaching of our Saviour under a new aspect, much more doctrinal, and also more abstract, than that which it bears in the works of the Synoptical writers, to whose compositions it adds little in matters of fact, unless when special teaching was connected with them, or when, as in the two closing chapters, the Evangelist had to record circumstances immediately connected with the foundation of the Church. In this simple description, I seek to avoid wholly the controverted questions whether this was a supplementary Gospel, intended by its author to fill up what his predecessors had left unsupplied of the history of our Lord's life; or whether it was a polemical Gospel, written for the confutation of heresies then already budding in the Church; or whether its aim was one purely didactic, but with views more comprehensive and profound than those of the preceding Evangelists; or in what proportions and modes either or all of these purposes may have been combined in its composition.

It is quite enough for the present purpose to refer to a matter of fact which cannot be confuted, though it may be, and has been, exaggerated, namely this — that there is a difference between the general strain of the Synoptical Evangelists (so far as it is common to the three) and of the fourth, and that this difference consists in a greater development, in deeper soundings, in a higher elevation.

M. Renan, in his work on the Life of Christ, which he himself ingenuously declares to be the production of one who is not, though he has been, in the ordinary sense, a believer,* and which some persons have, as I think most unaptly, compared with the "Ecce Homo," treats this difference as destructive of the truthfulness either of the earlier or of the later picture. To my mind, though there is no real difficulty in either, the notable correspondence of the first three Evangelists would seem quite as apt to suggest suspicion as the marked distinctions of the fourth. Of the fact there can be no question. It has, if I mistake not, been pointedly noticed by Coleridge; on whose refined and penetrating mind the Gospel of St. John exercised a most happy influence in bringing him to the belief of the accepted Christian doctrine. But why should it be incredible, or even strange, that of any teaching whatever,

* "Vie de Jésus," Introduction, p. lviii.

much more than of such marvellous teaching as our Lord's, some elements should pass more easily into some minds, and others into other minds of a different complexion or affinity? The disciple whom Jesus loved has given us the fullest and deepest picture of His love. But it has been justly remarked by Dean Alford that there are scattered over the pages of the Synoptics a certain number of passages, which are in precise correspondence with the general strain of St. John. And it cannot be too carefully borne in mind that while St. John discloses to us a more inward aspect of the doctrine of our Lord, and supplies many propositions that we could not directly gather from his predecessors, the moral and practical bearings of the Four Evangelists are in close and thorough correspondence. They have the very same ethical basis, and they go to produce the very same frame of mind and course of action; and by this very fact, the case of the Gospels is for ever separated from any true analogy with the rival representations of Socrates in the works of Plato and of Xenophon respectively, where the ethical bearings of the two systems appear to be widely different, if not altogether irreconcileable. But I have, perhaps, pursued too long this interesting subject, of which a fuller development would on this occasion be out of place.

It is enough for us to perceive that the communication of our Lord's life, discourses, and actions to believers by means of the four Gospels was so arranged in the order of God's providence that they should be first supplied with biographies of Him which have for their staple His miracles and His ethical teaching, while the mere doctrinal and abstract portion of his instructions was a later addition to the patrimony of the Christian church. So far as it goes, such a fact may serve to raise presumptions in favour of the author of "Ecce Homo," inasmuch as he is principally charged with this, that he has not put into his foreground the full splendour and majesty of the Redeemer about whom he writes. If this be true of Him, it is true also thus far of the Gospels.

But now let us carry the investigation further. Let us pass from the biographies to the life—from the picture to the Person; and let us inquire whether in any and in what degree it is true that the method pursued also by Him, and if so then the method which an absolute and perfect wisdom prompted, was a method of graduation, a method in which the great Chris-

tian ideas were presented not simultaneously nor in a mass, but with a certain succession, and a studied order. If so, and if we can find what it was, and if we can also, in some slight degree, perceive the advantages it received and the dangers it avoided, we shall derive from our humble labour new cause for thankfulness and new grounds for contemplating with reverence and adoration the providential action of the Most High.

Thus far, then, I have endeavoured to show that the method and order of religious teaching may vary, as between the period of first introduction, on the one hand, and of established possession and hereditary transmission on the other; that there were reasons in the state of the world at the period of the Advent for a careful and delicate regulation of the approaches for the new religion to the mind of man; and that in the matter and succession of the Gospels we may find a succinct testimony to this system of providential adjustment.

It will remain principally to examine how far the manner in which the author of "Ecce Homo" exhibits the picture of our Lord finds analogies and support in His own method of teaching; and how far the recurrence to such a method in such a work is well or ill adapted to the needs of the time in which we live.

From The Cornhill Magazine.

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.

CHAPTER VII.

IN BLUNDERBORE'S CASTLE.

WHEN Jack first made the acquaintance of the board on the Wednesday after he first came to the workhouse, the seven or eight gentlemen sitting round the green table greeted him quite as one of themselves as he came into the room. This was a dull September morning; the mist seemed to have oozed in through the high window and continually opening door. When Jack passed through the outer or entrance room, he saw a heap of wistful faces and rags already waiting for admittance, some women and some children, a man with an arm in a sling, one or two workhouse *habitues*—there was no mistaking the hard coarse faces. Two old paupers were keeping watch at the door,

and officiously flung it open for him to pass in. The guardians had greeted him very affably on the previous occasion,—a man of the world, a prosperous but eccentric vicar, was not to be treated like an everyday curate and chaplain. "Ah, how-d'y-e-do, Mr. Trevithic?" said the half-pay Captain, the chairman. The gas-fitter cleared his throat and made a sort of an attempt at a bow. The wholesale grocer rubbed his two hands together,—Pitchley his name was I think,—for some reason or other, he exercised great influence over the rest. But on this eventful Wednesday morning the *Jupiter* had come out with this astounding letter—about themselves, their workhouse, their master, their private paupers. It was a day they never forgot, and the natural indignation of the board overflowed.

Perhaps Jack would have done better had he first represented matters to them, but he knew that at least two of the guardians were implicated. He was afraid of being silenced and of having the affair hushed up. He cared not for the vials of their wrath being emptied upon him so long as they cleansed the horrible place in their outpour. He walked in quite brisk and placid to meet the storm. The guardians had not all seen the *Jupiter* as they came dropping in. Oker, the gas-man, was late, and so was Pitchley as it happened, and when they arrived Jack was already standing in his pillory and facing the indignant chairman.

"My friend Colonel Hambleton wrote the letter from notes which I gave him," said Jack. "I considered publicity best;—under the circumstances, I could not be courteous," he said, "if I hoped to get through this disagreeable business at all effectually. I could not have selected any one of you gentlemen as confidants in common fairness to the others. I wished the inquiry to be complete and searching. I was obliged to brave the consequences."

"Upon my word I think you have acted right," said one of the guardians, a doctor, a bluff old fellow who liked frank speaking. But an indignant murmur expressed the dissent of the other members of the board.

"I have been here a fortnight," said Jack. "I had not intended speaking so soon of what I now wish to bring before your notice, but the circumstances seem to me so urgent and so undoubted that I can see no necessity for deferring my complaint any longer."

"Dear me, sir," said the gas-fitter, "I 'ope there's nothink wrong?"

"Everything, more or less," said Trevithic quietly. "In the first place I wish to bring

before you several cases of great neglect on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Bulcox."

Here the chairman coloured up. "I think, Mr. Trevithic, we had better have the master present if you have any complaint to lodge against him."

"By all means," said Trevithic impassively, and he turned over his notes while one of the trembling old messengers went off for the master.

The master arrived and the matron too. "How-d'y-e-do, Bulcox?" said the chairman. Mrs. Bulcox dropped a respectful sort of curtsey, and Trevithic immediately began without giving time for the others to speak. He turned upon the master.

"I have a complaint to lodge against you and Mrs. Bulcox, and at the chairman's suggestion I waited for you to be present."

"Against me, sir?" said Bulcox, indignantly.

"Against me and Mr. Bulcox!" said the woman, with a bewildered, injured, saint-like sort of swoop.

"Yes," said Jack.

"Have you seen the letter in the *Jupiter*?" said the chairman gravely to Mr. Bulcox.

"Mr. Bulcox was good enough to post the letter himself," Jack interposed briskly. "It was to state that I consider that you, Mr. Bulcox, are totally unfit for your present situation as master. I am aware that you have good friends among these gentlemen, and that, as far as they can tell, your conduct has always been a model of deference and exemplariness. Now," said Jack, "with the board's permission I will lodge my complaints against you in form." And here Trevithic pulled out his little book and read out as follows:

"1. That the management and economy of this workhouse are altogether disgraceful.

"2. That you have been guilty of cruelty to two or three of the inmates.

"3. That you have embezzled or misapplied certain sums of money allowed to you for the relief of the sick paupers under your care."

But here the chairman, guardians, master and mistress, would hear no more; all interrupted Trevithic at once.

"Really, sir, you must substantiate such charges as these. Leave the room" (to the messengers at the door).

"I cannot listen to such imputations," from the master.

"What have we done to you that you should say such cruel, false things?" from the mistress. "Oh, sir," (to the chairman,) "say you don't believe him."

"If you will come with me now," Jack continued, "I think I can prove some of my statements. Do you know that the little children here are crying with hunger? Do you know that the wine allowed for the use of the sick has been regularly appropriated by these two wretches?" cried Trevithic in an honest fury. "Do you know that people here are lying in their beds in misery, at this instant, who have not been moved or touched for weeks and weeks; that the nurses follow the example of those who are put over them, and drink, and ill-use their patients; that the food is stinted, the tea is undrinkable, the meat is bad and scarcely to be touched; that the very water flows from a foul cesspool; that at this instant, in a cellar in the house, there are three girls shut up, without beds or any conceivable comfort,—one has been there four days and nights, another has been shut up twice in one week in darkness and unspeakable misery? Shall I tell you the crime of this culprit? She spoke saucily to the matron, and this is her punishment. Will you come with me now, and see whether or not I have been speaking the truth?"

There was not one word he could not substantiate. He had not been idle all this time, he had been collecting his proofs,—ghastly proofs they were.

The sight of the three girls brought blinded and staggering out of the cellar had more effect than all the statements and assertions which Mr. Trevithic had been at such great pains to get together. The Bulcoxes were doomed; of this there could be no doubt. They felt it themselves as they plodded across the yard with the little mob of excited and curious guardians. Oker, the gas-fitter, took their part indeed, so did the grocer. The old doctor nearly fell upon the culprits then and there. The rest of the guardians seemed to be divided in their indignation against Jack for telling, against Bulcox for being found out, against the paupers for being ill-used, for being paupers; against the reporter for publishing such atrocious libels. It was no bed of roses that Trevithic had made for himself.

A special meeting was convened for the end of the week.

As years go by, and we see more of life and of our fellow-creatures, the by-play of existence is curiously unfolded to us, and we may, if we choose, watch its threads twisting and untwisting, flying apart, and coming together. People rise from their sick-beds, come driving up in carriages, come walking along the street into each other's lives. As A. trips along by the garden-wall, Z. at the

other end of the world, perhaps, is thinking that he is tired of this solitary bushman's life; he was meant for something better than sheep-shearing and driving convicts, and he says to himself that he will throw it all up and go back to England, and see if there is not bread enough left in the old country to support one more of her sons. Here, perhaps, A. stoops to pick a rose, and places it in her girdle, and wonders whether that is C. on the rough pony riding along the road from market. As for Z., A. has never even conceived the possibility of his existence. But by this time Z. at the other end of the world has made up his mind, being a man of quick and determined action, and poor C.'s last chance is over, and pretty A., with the rose in her girdle, will never be his. Or it may be that Z., after due reflection, likes the looks of his tallows, X. and Y. come to the station, which had hitherto only been visited by certain very wild-looking letters of the alphabet, with feathers in their heads, and faces streaked with white paint, and A. gives her rose to C., who puts it in his button-hole with awkward country gallantry, quite unconscious of the chance they have both run that morning, and that their fate has been settled for them at the other end of the world.

When my poor A. burst into tears at the beginning of this story, another woman, who should have been Trevithic's wife, as far as one can judge speaking of such matters, a person who could have sympathized with his ambitions and understood the direction of his impulses, a woman with enough enthusiasm and vigour in her nature to carry her bravely through the tangles and difficulties which only choked and scratched and tired out poor Anne—this person, who was not very far off at the time, and no other than Mary Myles, said to some one who was with her—and she gave a pretty sad smile and quick shake of the head as she spoke,—

"No, it is no use. I have nothing but friendliness, a horrible, universal feeling of friendliness, left for any of my fellow-creatures. I will confess honestly" (and here she lost her colour a little) "I did wrong once. I married my husband for a home—most people know how I was punished and what a miserable home it was. I don't mind telling you, Colonel Hambleton, for you well understand how it is that I must make the best of my life in this arid and lonely waste to which my own fault has brought me."

Mrs. Myles' voice faltered as she spoke, and she hung her head to hide the tears which had come into her eyes. And Colo-

nel Hambledon took this as an answer to a question he had almost asked her, and went away. "If ever you should change your mind," he said, "you would find me the same a dozen years hence." And Mary only sighed and shook her head.

But all this was years ago—three years nearly by the Dulcie almanac—and if Mary Myles sometimes thought she had done foolishly when she sent Charles Hambledon away, there was no one to whom she could own it—not even to her cousin Fanny, who had no thoughts of marrying or giving in marriage, or wishes for happiness beyond the ordering her garden-beds and the welfare of her poor people.

Fanny one day asked her cousin what had become of her old friend the Colonel. Mary blushed up brightly, and said she did not know; she believed he was in Hammersley. Fanny, who was cutting out little flannel-vests for her school-children, was immediately lost in the intricacies of a gore, and did not notice the blush or the bright amused glance in the quiet grey eyes that were watching her at her benevolent toil. Snip, snip, sni-i-i-i-i-ip went the scissors with that triumphant screeching sound which all good housewives love to hear. Mary was leaning back in her chair, perfectly lazy and unoccupied, with her little white hands crossed upon her knees, and her pretty head resting against the chair. She would not have been sorry to have talked a little more upon a subject that was not uninteresting to her, and she tried to make Fanny speak.

"What do you think of him? Have you heard if he has come?" she asked, a little shyly.

"Oh, I don't know. No, I have not seen any of them for a long time," said Fanny absently. "Mary, are you not ashamed of being so lazy? Come and hold these strips."

Mary did as she was bid, and held out grey flannel strips at arms' length, and watching the scissors flashing, the pins twinkling, and the neat little heaps rising all about on the floor and the chairs and the tables. Then Mrs. Myles tried again. "Mr. Trevithic tells me that Colonel Hambledon is coming down to help him with this workhouse business. You will have to ask them both to dinner, Fanny."

Fanny did not answer for a minute. She hesitated, looked Mary full in the face, and then said very thoughtfully, "Don't you think unbleached calico will be best to line the jackets with? It will keep the children warm, poor little things." The children's little backs might be warmed by

this heap of snips and linings; but Mary suddenly felt as if all the wraps and flannels and calicoes were piled upon her head, and choking and oppressing her, while all the while her heart was cold and shivering, poor thing! There are no flannel-jackets that I know of to warm sad hearts such as hers.

Fanny Garnier was folding up the last of her jackets; Mary, after getting through more work in half-an-hour than Fanny the methodical could manage in two, had returned to her big arm-chair, and was leaning back in the old listless attitude, dreaming dreams of her own, as her eyes wandered to the window and followed the line of the trees showing against the sky—when the door opened, and a stupid country man-servant suddenly introduced Jack, and the Colonel of Mrs. Myles' visionary recollections in actual person, walking into the very midst of the snippings and parings which were scattered about on the floor. Fanny was in nowise disconcerted. She rather gloried in her occupation. I cannot say so much for Mary, who nervously hated any show or affectation of philanthropy, and who now jumped up hastily, with an exclamation, an outstretched hand, and a blush.

"There seems to be something going on," the Colonel said, standing over a heap of straggling "backs" and "arms."

"Do come upstairs out of this labyrinth of good intentions," cried Mary hastily. "Fanny, please put down your scissors, and let us go up."

"I'll follow," said Fanny placidly, and Mary had to lead the way alone to the long low bow-windowed drawing-room which Trevithic knew so well. She had regained her composure and spirits by the time they reached the landing at the top of the low flight of oak steps; and, indeed, both Hambledon and Mrs. Myles were far too much used to the world and its ways to betray to each other the smallest indication of the real state of their minds. Three years had passed since they parted. If Mary's courage had failed then, it was the Colonel's now that was wanting; and so it happens with people late in life—the fatal gift of experience is theirs. They mistrust, they hesitate, they bargain to the uttermost farthing; the jewel is there, but it is locked up so securely in strong boxes and wrappers, that it is beyond the power of the possessors to reach it. Their youth and simplicity is as much a part of them still as their placid middle age; but it is hidden away under the years which are heaped upon the past, and its glory is not shining as of old upon their

brows. Mrs. Myles and the Colonel each were acting a part, and perfectly at ease as they discussed all manner of things that had been since they met, and might be before they met again. Fanny, having folded away the last of her flannels, came up placid and smiling too; and after half-an-hour the two gentlemen went away. Fanny forgot to ask them to dinner, and wondered why her cousin was so cross all the rest of the afternoon.

No, Mary would not go out. No, she had no headache, thank you. As soon as she had got rid of Fanny and her questionings, Mary Myles ran up to her room and pulled out some old, old papers and diaries, and read the old tear-stained records till new tears fell to wash away the old ones. Ah, yes, she had done rightly when she sent Hambledon away. Three years ago — it had seemed to her then that a lifetime of expiation would not be too long to repent of the wrong she had done when she married — loveless, thrifstful, longing (and that, poor soul, had been her one excuse,) for the possible love that had never come to her. Life is so long, the time is so slow that passes wearily: she had been married three years, she had worn sackcloth three years; and now, — now if it were not too late, how gladly, how gratefully, she would grasp a hope of some life more complete than the sad one she had led ever since she could remember almost. Would it not be a sign that she had been forgiven if the happiness she had so longed for came to her at last? Mary wondered that her troubles had left no deeper lines upon her face; wondered that she looked so young still, so fair and smiling, while her heart felt so old; and smiled sadly at her own face in the glass.

And then as people do to whom a faint dawn of rising hope shows the darkness in which they have been living, Mrs. Myles began to think of some of her duties that she had neglected of late, and of others still in darkness for whom no dawn was nigh: and all the while, as people do whose hearts are full, she was longing for some one to speak to, some one wiser than herself to whom she could say, What is an expiation? can it, does it exist? is it the same as repentance? are we called upon to crush our hearts, to put away our natural emotions? Fanny would say yes, and would scorn her for her weakness, and cry out with horror at a second marriage. "And so would I have done," poor Mary thought, "if — if poor Tom had only been fond of me." And then the thought of Trevithic came to her as a person to speak to, a helper and ad-

viser. He would speak the truth; he would not be afraid, Mary thought; and the secret remembrance that he was Hambledon's friend did not make her feel less confidence in his decisions.

CHAPTER VIII.

HASTY PUDDING AND BLOWS FROM A CLUB.

MRS. MYLES had been away some little time from her house at Sandsea, and from the self-imposed duties which were waiting undone until her return. Something of admiration for Trevithic's energy and enterprise made her think that very day of certain poor people she had left behind, and whom she had entirely forgotten. Before Fanny came home that evening, she sat down and wrote to her old friend, Miss Triquett, begging her to be so good as to go to Mrs. Gummers, and one or two more whose names, ages, troubles, and families were down upon her list, and distribute a small sum of money enclosed. "I am not afraid of troubling you, dear Miss Triquett," wrote Mary Myles, in her big, picturesque handwriting. "I know your kind heart, and that you never grudge time nor fatigue when you can help any one out of the smallest trouble or the greatest. I have been seeing a good deal lately of Mr. Trevithic, who is of your way of thinking, and who has been giving himself an infinity of pains about some abuses in the workhouse here. He is, I do believe, one of the few people who could have come to the help of the poor creatures. He has so much courage and temper, such a bright and generous way of sympathizing and entering into other people's troubles, that I do not despair of his accomplishing this good work. My cousin and I feel very, much with and for him. He looked ill and worn one day when I called upon him; but I am glad to think that coming to us has been some little change and comfort to him. He is quite alone, and we want him to look upon this place as his home while he is here. Your old acquaintance Colonel Hambledon has come down about this business. It is most horrifying. Can you imagine the poor sick people left with tipsy nurses, and more dreadful still, girls locked up in cellars by the cruel matron for days at a time? but this fact has just been made public.

"Goodness and enthusiasm like Mr. Trevithic's seem all the more beautiful when one hears such terrible histories of wicked-

ness and neglect: one needs an example like his in this life to raise one from the unprofitable and miserable concerns of every day, and to teach one to believe in nobler efforts than one's own selfish and aimless wanderings could ever lead to unassisted.

"Pray remember me very kindly to Miss Moineaux and to Mrs. Trevithic, and believe me, dear Miss Triquett,

"Very sincerely yours,
"MARY MYLES.

"Is Mrs. Trevithic again suffering from neuralgia? Why is not she able to be with her husband?"

"Why, indeed?" said Miss Moineaux, hearing this last sentence read out by Miss Triquett. This excellent spinster gave no answer. She read this letter twice through deliberately; then she tied her bonnet securely on, and trotted off to Gummers and Co. Then, having dispensed the bounties and accepted the thanks of the poor creatures, she determined to run the chance of finding Mrs. Trevithic at home. "It is my painful dooty," said Triquett to herself, shaking her head—"my painful dooty. Anne Trevithic should go to her husband; and I will tell her so. If I were Mr. Trevithic's wife, should I leave him to toil alone? No, I should not. Should I permit him to seek sympathy and consolation with another, more fascinating perhaps? No, certainly not. And deeply grateful should I have felt to her who warned me on my fatal career; and surely my young friend Anne will be grateful to her old friend whose finger arrests her on the very edge of the dark precipice." Miss Triquett's reflections had risen in eloquence by the time she reached the rectory door. A vision of Anne clinging to her in tears, imploring her advice, of John shaking her warmly by the hand and murmuring that to Miss Triquett they owed the renewed happiness of their home, beguiled the way. "Where is Mrs. Trevithic?" she asked the butler, in her deepest voice. "Leave us," said Miss Triquett to the bewildered menial as he opened the drawing-room door and she marched into the room; and then encountering Mrs. Trevithic, she suddenly clasped her in her well-meaning old arms.

"I have that to say to you," said Miss Triquett, in answer to Anne's amazed exclamation, "which I fear will give you pain; but were I in your place, I should wish to hear the truth." The good old soul was in earnest; her voice trembled, and her little black curls shook with agitation.

"Pray do not hesitate to mention any-

thing," said Mrs. Trevithic, surprised but calm, and sitting down and preparing to listen attentively. "I am sure anything you would like to have attended to"—

Miss Triquett, at the invocation, pulled out the letter from her pocket. "Remember, only remember this," she said, "this comes from a young and attractive woman." And then in a clear and ringing voice she read out poor Mary's letter, with occasional unspeakable and penetrating looks at Anne's calm features.

Poor little letter! It had been written in the sincerity and innocence of Mary's heart. Any one more deeply read in such things might have wondered why Colonel Hambleton's name should have been brought into it; but as it was, it caused a poor jealous heart to beat with a force, a secret throb of sudden jealousy, that nearly choked Anne for an instant as she listened, and a faint pink tinge came rising up and colouring her face.

"Remember, she is *very* attractive," Miss Triquett re-echoed, folding up the page. "Ah! be warned, my dear young friend. Go to him; throw yourself into his arms; say, 'Dearest, darling husband, your little wife is by your side once more; I will be your comforter!' Do not hesitate." Poor old Triquett, completely carried away by the excitement of the moment, had started from her seat, and with extended arms had clasped an imaginary figure in the air. It was ludicrous, it was pathetic to see this poor old silly meddlesome creature quivering, as her heart beat and bled for the fate of others. She had no tear or emotion of her own. It was absurd — was it not? — that she should care so deeply for things which could not affect her in the least degree. There was Anne, with her usual self-possession, calmly subduing her irritation. She did not smile; she did not frown; she did not seem to notice this momentary ebullition. To me it seems that, of the two, my sympathy is with Miss Triquett. Let us be absurd, by all means, if that is the price which must be paid for something which is well worth its price.

Miss Triquett's eyes were full of tears. "I am impetuous, Mrs. Trevithic," she said. "My aunt has often found fault with me for it. Pray excuse me if I have interfered un-warrantably."

"Interference between married people rarely does any good, Miss Triquett," said Anne, standing up with an icy platitude, and unmistakably showing that she considered the visit at an end.

"Good-by," said poor Miss Triquett, wist-

fully. "Remember me most kindly to your papa."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Trevithic. "I am afraid you will have a disagreeable walk back in the rain, Miss Triquett. Good-evening. Pray give my compliments to Miss Moineaux."

The old maid trudged off alone into the mud and the rain, with a mortified sense of having behaved absurdly, disappointed and tired, and vaguely ashamed and crestfallen. The sound of the dinner-bell ringing at the rectory as she trudged down the hill in the dark and dirt, did not add to her cheerfulness.

Anne, with flushed red cheeks and trembling hands, as Triquett left the room, sank down into her chair for a moment, and then suddenly starting up, busied herself exactly as usual with her daily task of putting the drawing-room in order before she went up to dress. Miss Triquett's seat she pushed right away out of sight. She collected her father's writing-materials and newspapers, and put them straight. She then re-read her husband's last few lines. There was nothing to be gleaned from them. She replenished the flower-stands, and, suddenly remembering that it was Mrs. Myles who had given them to her, she seized one tall glass fabric and all but flung it angrily on the ground. But reflecting that if it were broken it would spoil the pair, she put it back again into its corner, and contented herself with stuffing in all the ugliest scraps of twigs, dead leaves and flowers from the refuse of her basket.

The rector and his daughter dined at half-past five; it was a whim of the old man's. Anne clutched Dulcie in her arms before she went down after dressing. The child had never seen her mamma so excited, and never remembered being kissed like that before by her. "D'oo lub me vely mush to-day, mamma?" said Dulcie, pathetically. "Is it toz I 'ave my new fock?"

Old Mr. Bellingham came in at the sound of the second bell, smiling as usual, and rubbing his comfortable little fat hands together; he did not remark that anything was amiss with his daughter, though he observed that there was not enough cayenne in the gravy of the veal cutlets, and that the cook had forgotten the necessary teaspoonful of sugar in the soup. For the first time since he could remember Anne failed to sympathize with his natural vexation, and seemed scarcely as annoyed as usual at the neglect which had been shown. Mr. Bellingham was vexed with her for her indifference: he always left the scolding to her; he

liked everything to go smooth and comfortable, and he did not like to be called upon personally to lose his temper. "For what we have received"—and the butler retires with the crumbs and the cloths, and the little old gentleman—who has had a fire lighted, for the evenings are getting chilly—draws comfortably in to his chimney-corner; while Anne, getting up from her place at the head of the table, says abruptly that she must go upstairs and see what Dulcie is about. A restless mood had come over her; something unlike anything she had ever felt before. Little Triquett's eloquence, which had not even seemed to disturb Anne at the time, had had full time to sink into this somewhat torpid apprehension, and excite Mrs. Trevithic's indignation. It was not the less fierce because it had smouldered so long.

"Insolent creature!" Anne said to herself, working herself up into a passion; "how dare she interfere? Insolent ridiculous creature! 'Remember that that woman is attractive, — How dare she speak so to me? Oh, they are all in league—in league against me!" cried poor Anne, with a moan, wringing her hands with all the twinkle of stones upon her slim white fingers. "John does not love me, he never loved me! He will not do as I wish, though he promised and swore at the altar he would. And she—she is spreading her wicked toils round him, and keeping him there, while I am here alone—all alone; and he leaves me exposed to the insolence of those horrible old maids. Papa eats his dinner and only thinks of the flavour of the dishes, and Dulcie chatters to her doll and don't care, and no one comes when I ring," sobbed Mrs. Trevithic in a burst of tears, violently tugging at the bell-rope. "Oh, it is a shame, a shame!"

Only as she wiped away the tears a gleam of determination came into Mrs. Trevithic's blue eyes, and the flush on her pale cheeks deepened. She had taken a resolution. This is what she would do—this was her resolution: she would go and confront him there on the spot and remind him of his duty—he who was preaching to others. It was her right; and then—and then she would leave him for ever, and never return to Sandsea to be scoffed at and jeered at by those horrible women, said Anne vaguely to herself as the door opened and the maid appeared. "Bring me a *Bradshaw, Judson*," said Mrs. Trevithic, very much in her usual tone of voice, and with a great effort recovering her equanimity. The storm had passed over, stirring the waters of this over-

grown pool, breaking away the weeds which were growing so thickly on the stagnant surface, and rippling the slow shallows underneath. It seems a contradiction to write of this dull and unimpressionable woman now and then waking and experiencing some vague emotion and realization of experiences which had been slowly gathering, and apparently unnoticed, for a long time before : but who does not count more than one contradiction among their experiences? It was not Anne's fault that she could not understand, feel quickly and keenly, respond to the calls which stronger and more generous natures might make upon her ; her tears flowed dull and slow long after the cause, unlike the quick bright drops that would spring to Mary Myles' clear eyes—Mary whom the other woman hated with a natural, stupid, persistent hatred that nothing ever could change.

Judson, the maid, who was not deeply read in human nature, and who respected her mistress immensely as a model of decision, precision, deliberate determination, was intensely amazed to hear that she was to pack up that night, and that Mrs. Trevithic would go to London that evening by the nine-o'clock train.

"Send for a fly directly, Judson, and dress Miss Dulcie."

"Dress Miss Dulcie?" Judson asked, bewildered.

"Yes, Miss Dulcie will come too," said Anne, in a way that left no remonstrance.

She did not own it to herself; but by a strange and wayward turn of human nature, this woman—who was going to reproach her husband, to leave him for ever, to cast herself adrift from him—took Dulcie with her : Dulcie, a secret defence, a bond and strong link between them, that she knew no storm or tempest would ever break.

Mr. Bellingham was too much astounded to make a single objection. He thought his daughter had taken leave of her senses when she came in and said good-by.

Poor thing, the storm raging in her heart was a fierce one. Gusts of passion and jealousy were straining and beating and tearing ; "sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost." Poor Anne, whose emotions were all the more ungovernable when they occasionally broke from the habitual restraint in which she held them, sat in her corner of the carriage, picturing to herself Trevithic enslaved, enchanted. If she could have seen the poor fellow adding up long lists of figures in his dreary little office, by the light of a smoking lamp, I think her jealousy might have been appeased.

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All the way to town Anne sat silent in her corner ; but if she deserved punishment, poor thing, she inflicted it then upon herself, and with an art and an unrelenting determination for which no other executioner would have found the courage.

They reached the station at last, with its lights and transient life and bustle. A porter called a cab. Dulcie, and the maid, and Mrs. Trevithic got in. They were to sleep at the house of an old lady, a sister of Mr. Bellingham's, who was away, as Anne knew, but whose housekeeper would admit them.

And then the journey began once more across dark passages, winding thoroughfares, interminable in their lights and darkness, across dark places that may have been squares. The darkness changed and lengthened the endless road : they had left Oxford Street, with its blazing shops ; they had crossed the Park's blackness ; the roll of the wheels was like the tune of some dismal night-march. The maid sat with Dulcie asleep in her arms, but presently Dulcie woke up with a shrill piteous outcry. "I see so ti'ed," she sobbed in the darkness, the coldness, the dull drip of the rain, the monotonous sound of the horse's feet striking on the mud. "I wan' my tea; I see so ti'ed, wan' my little bed"—this was her piteous litany.

Anne was very gentle and decided with her, only once she burst out, "Oh, don't, don't, I cannot bear it, Dulcie."

Our lives often seem to answer strangely to our wishes. Is there some hidden power by which our spirits work upon the substance of which our fate is built. Jack wished to fight. Assault him now, dire spirit of ill-will, of despondency, and that most cruel spirit of all called calumny. This tribe of giants are like the bottle-monsters of the Arabian Nights, intangible, fierce, sly, remorseless, springing up suddenly mighty shadows coming in the night and striking their deadly blows. They raise their clubs (and these clubs are not trees torn from the forest, but are made from the forms of human beings massed together), and the clubs fall upon the victim and he is crushed.

There was a brandy-and-water weekly meeting at Hammersley, called "Ours," every Thursday evening, to which many of the tradespeople were in the habit of resorting and there discussing the politics of the place. Mr. Bulcox had long been a member, so was Pitchley the grocer, and Oker himself did not disdain to join the party ; and as John was not there to con-

tradict them, you may be sure these people told their own story. How it spread I cannot tell, but it is easy to imagine: one rumour after another to the hurt and disadvantage of poor Trevithic began to get about. Reformers are necessarily unpopular among a certain class. The blind and the maimed and the halt worshipped the ground Trevithic stood upon at first. "He was a man as would see to their rights," they said; "and if he had his way, would let them have their snuff and a drop of something comfortable. He had his cranks. These open windows gave 'em the rheumatics, and this sloppin' and washin' was all along of it, and for all the talk there were some things but what they wouldn't deny was more snug in Bulcox's time than now; but he were a good creature for all that, Mr. Trevithic, and meant well he did," &c., &c. Only when the snuff and the comfortable drop did not come as they expected, and the horrors of the past dynasty began to be a little forgotten — at the end of a month or so of whitewashing and cleansing and reforming, the old folks began to grumble again much as usual. Trevithic could not take away their years and their aches and pains and wearinesses, and make the work-house into a bower of roses and the old people into lovely young lasses and gallant lads again.

He had done his best, but he could not work miracles.

It happened that a Lincolnshire doctor writing from Downham to the *Jupiter* not long after, eloquently describing the symptoms, the treatment, the means of prevention for this new sort of cholera, spoke of the devotion of some and the curious indifference of others. "Will it be believed," he said, "that in some places the clergyman has been known to abandon his flock at the first threat of danger — a threat which in one especial case at F. not far from here was not fulfilled, although the writer can testify from his own experience to the truth of the above statement?"

As far as poor Jack's interests were concerned it would have been better for him if the cholera had broken out at Featherston; it would have brought him back to his own home. But Penfold recovered, Mrs. Hodge — the only other patient — died, Hodge married again immediately, and that was the end of it. "Ours" took in the *Jupiter*; somebody remembered that Downham and Featherston were both in the same neighbourhood; some one else applied the story, and Bulcox and the gas-fitter between them concocted a paragraph for the

Anvil, the great Hammersley organ; and so ill-will and rumour did their work, while Jack went his rounds in the wards of St. Magdalene's, looking sadder than the first day he had come, although the place was cleaner, the food warmer and better, the sick people better tended than ever before; for the guardians had been persuaded to let in certain deaconesses of the town — good women, who nursed for love and did not steal the tea. But in the meantime this odd cabal which had set in had risen and grown, and from every side Jack began to meet with cold looks and rebuffs. He had ill-used his wife, deserted her, they said; abandoned his parish from fear of infection. He had forged, he had been expelled from his living. There was nothing that poor Jack was not accused of by one person or another. One day when his friend Austin came in with the last number of the *Anvil*, and showed him a very spiteful paragraph about himself, Jack only shrugged his shoulders. "We understand that the gentleman whose extraordinary revelations respecting the management of our workhouse have been met by some with more credence than might have been expected, considering the short time which had passed since he first came among us, is the rector alluded to in a recent letter to the *Jupiter* from a medical man, who deserted his parish at the first alarm of cholera." "Can this be true?" said Austin, gravely.

"Mrs. Hodge certainly died of the cholera," Jack answered, "and Penfold was taken ill and recovered. Those are the only two cases in my parish."

A little later in the day, as the two young men were walking along the street, they met Mr. Oker puffing along the pavement. He stopped as usual to rub his hands when he saw Trevithic.

"As your attention been called, sir," he said, "to a paragraph in the *Hanvil*, that your friends should contradict, if possible, sir? It's mos' distressin' when such things gets into the papers. They say at the club that some of the guardians is about to ask for an account of the sick-fund money, sir, which, I believe, Mr. Skipper put into your 'ands, sir. For the present this paragraph should be contradicted, if possible, sir."

Oker was an odious creature, insolent and civil; and as he spoke he gave a sly, spiteful glance into Jack's face. Trevithic was perfectly unmoved, and burst out laughing. "My good Mr. Oker," he said, "you will be sorry to hear that there is no foundation whatever in the paragraph. It is some silly tittle-tattling tale, which does

not affect me in the least. If any one is to blame, it is Mr. Skipper, the workhouse chaplain, who was then in my place. You can tell your friends at the club that they have hit the wrong man. Good-day." And the young fellow marched on his way with Mr. Austin, leaving Oker to recover as best he could.

"I'm afraid they will give you trouble yet," Austin said. "King Stork thought you are after that little Log of a Skipper."

When Jack appeared before the board on the next Wednesday, after the vote had been passed for dismissing the Bulcoxes, it seemed to him that one-half of the room greeted his entrance with a scowl of ill-will and disgust, the other half with alarm and suspicion. No wonder. It was Jack's belief that some of the guardians were seriously implicated in the charges which had been brought against Bulcox; others were certainly so far concerned that the *Jupiter* had accused them of unaccountable neglect; and nobody likes to be shown up in a leader even for merely neglecting his duties.

All this while the workhouse had been in a commotion; the master and mistress were only temporarily fulfilling their duties until a new couple should have been appointed. The board, chiefly at the instance of Oker the gas-fitter, and Pitchley the retail grocer, did not press the charges brought against Mr. Bulcox; but they contented themselves with dismissing him and his wife. It was not over-pleasant for Trevithic to meet them about the place, as he could not help doing occasionally; but there was no help for it, and he bore the disagreeables of the place as best he could, until Mr. and Mrs. Evans, the newly-appointed master and matron, made their appearance. The board was very civil, but it was anything but cordial to Trevithic. Jack, among other things, suspected that Pitchley himself supplied the bad tea and groceries which had been so much complained of, and had exchanged various bottles of port from the infirmary for others of a better quality, which were served at the master's own table. So the paupers told him.

Meanwhile the opposition had not been idle. It was Bulcox himself, I think, who had discovered that Jack, in administering the very limited funds at his disposal, had greatly neglected the precaution of tickets. One or two ill-conditioned people, whom Trevithic had refused to assist, had applied to the late master, and assured him that Trevithic was not properly dispensing the

money at his command. One tipsy old woman in particular was very indignant; and, judging by her own experience, did not hesitate to accuse the chaplain of keeping what was not his own.

This credible witness in rags and battered wires stood before the chairman when Jack came in. It seems impossible that anybody should have seriously listened to a complaint so absurd and unlikely. But it must be remembered that many of the people present were already ill disposed, that some of them were weak, and others stupid, and they would not have been sorry to get out of their scrape by discovering Jack to be of their own flesh and blood.

Trevithic heard them without a word, mechanically buttoning up his coat, as he had a trick of doing, and then in a sudden indignation he tore it open, and from his breast-pocket drew the small book in which he had made all his notes. "Here," said he, "are my accounts. They were made *hastily* at the time, but they are accurate, and you will see that I have paid every farthing away that was handed over to me by Mr. Skipper, and about twice the amount besides, out of my own pocket. You can send for the people to whom I have paid the money, if you like." The little book went travelling about from one hand to another, while the remorseless Trevithic continued, "I now in my turn demand that the ledgers of these gentlemen"—blazing round upon the retail grocer and Oker the gas-fitter—"be produced here immediately upon the spot, without any previous inspection, and that I, too, may have the satisfaction of clearing up my doubts as to their conduct." "That is fair enough," said one or two of the people present. "It's quite impossible, unheard of," said some of the others; but the majority of the guardians present were honest men, who were roused at last, and the ledgers were actually sent for.

I have no time here to explain the long course of fraud which these ledgers disclosed. The grocer was found to have been supplying the house at an enormous percentage, with quantities differing in his book and in that of the master, who must again have levied a profit. The gas-fitter, too, turned out to be the contractor from a branch establishment, and to have also helped himself. This giant certainly fell dead upon the floor when he laid open his accounts before the board, for Hammersley workhouse is now one of the best managed in the whole kingdom.

CHAPTER IX.

JACK HELPS TO DISENCHANT THE BEAUTIFUL LADY.

FANNY GARNIER bustled home one afternoon, brimming over, good soul, with rheumatisms, chicken-poxes, and other horrors that were not horrors to her, or interjections, or lamentations; but new reasons for exertions which were almost beyond her strength at times — as now, when she said wearily, "that she must go back to her ward; some one was waiting for things that she had promised." She was tired, and Mary, half ashamed, could not help offering to go in her cousin's place. It seemed foolish to refrain from what she would have done yesterday in all simplicity, because there was a chance that Hambledon was there to-day, or Trevithic, who was Hambledon's friend, if not quite Hambledon himself, who talked to him and knew his mind, and could repeat his talk.

When Mary reached the infirm ward, where she was taking her jellies, and bird's-eye, and liquorice, her heart gave a little flutter, for she saw that two figures were standing by one of the beds. One was Jack, who turned round to greet her as she came up with her basket on her arm. The other was Hambledon, who looked at her and then turned away. As for all the old women in their starched nightcaps, it was a moment of all-absorbing excitement to them, — sitting bolt upright on their beds, and bowing affably, as was the fashion in the infirm ward. It was quite worth while to be civil to the gentry, let alone manners; you never knew but what they might have a quarter-of-a-pound of tea, or a screw of snuff in their pockets. "Law bless you, it was not such as them as denies themselves anythink they may fancy." Such was the Hammersley creed.

As she came up, Mary made an effort, and in her most self-possessed and woman-of-the-worldest manner, put out her hand again and laughed, and exclaimed at this meeting. * Her shyness, and the very effort she made to conceal it, gave her an artificial manner that chilled and repelled poor Hambledon as no shyness or hesitation would have done. "She's no heart," said the poor Colonel to himself. "She don't remember. She would only laugh at me." He forgot that Mary was not a child, not even a very young woman; that this armour of expediency had grown up naturally with years and with the strain of a solitary life. It is a sort of defence to which the poor little

hedgehogs of women, such as Mary Myles, resort sometimes. It meant very little, but it frightened the Colonel away. Mrs. Myles heard him go as she bent over poor old Mrs. Crosspoint, and her heart gave a little ache, which was not entirely of sympathy for the poor old thing's troubles.

However, Mary had a little talk with Trevithic in the dark as she crossed the courts and passages, and he walked beside her, which did her good, though she said nothing that any one who did not know would have construed into more than it seemed to mean.

She told him a little about her past life. She did not tell him that Colonel Hambledon had once asked her to come into his life; but Trevithic knew all that she wanted to say as he listened to the voice speaking in the dark, — the sweet low voice with the music in it, — a revelation came to him there in the archway of that narrow workhouse stone passage.

A revelation came to him, and that instant, as was his way, he acted upon it. "I think some people" — he began, and then he stopped. "I think you should secure a friend," he said quickly, in an odd voice. "You should marry," and he faltered, as he made way for two poor women who limped past on their way to their corners in the great pigeon-holes case of human suffering. That little shake in his voice frightened Trevithic. What was it to him? How did Mary Myles' fate concern him? He let her out at the great gate. He did not offer to walk back with her. The great iron bars closed with a clang, as she went away out into the dim world that was surging round about these prison walls. He would go back to Anne, Trevithic said to himself; even while the last grateful words were uttering in his ears, and the sweet quick eyes still lighting up for him the dulness of the stony place. Mary Myles went back alone; and all that night Jack lay awake thinking, turning some things in his mind and avoiding others, wondering what he should say to Hambledon, what he should leave unsaid; for some nameless power had taught him to understand now, as he never had understood before, what was passing in other minds and hearts. A power too mighty for my poor Jack to encounter or hope to overcome in fight, a giant from whom the bravest can only turn away — so gentle is he, so beautiful, so humble in his irresistible might, that though many might conquer him if they would, they will not, and that is the battle.

And I think this giant must have been that nameless one we read of in the story

whom Jack did not care to fight, but he locked him up and barred him in the castle, and bolted gates and kept him safe behind them. The giant who in return for this strange treatment gave Jack the sword of sharpness and the cap of knowledge. The sword pricked fiercely enough, the cap of knowledge weighed, ah, too heavily, but Jack, as we know, did not shrink from pain.

The imprisoned giant touched some kindly chord in Jack's kind heart. Was he not Hambledon's friend? was he not a link between two people, very near and yet very far apart? Had Mary Myles' kindness been quite disinterested? he asked himself, a little bitterly, before he spoke; — spoke a few words which made Charles Hambledon flush up and begin to tug at his moustache, and which decided Mary Myles' fate as much as Anne Bellingham's tears had decided Jack's three years ago.

"Why don't you try again?" Trevithic said. "I think there might be a chance for you."

The Colonel did not answer, but went on pulling at his moustache. Trevithic was silent, too, and sighed. "I never saw any one like her," he said at last. "I think she carries a blessing wherever she goes. I, who am an old married man, may say so much, mayn't I? I have seen some men go on their knees for gratitude for what others are scarcely willing to put out their hands to take."

Poor Jack! The cap of knowledge was heavy on his brow as he spoke. He did not look to see the effect of his words. What would he not have said to serve her? He walked away to the desk where he kept his notes and account-books, and took pen and paper, and began to write.

"It is a lucky thing for me that you are a married man," the Colonel said, with an uneasy laugh. "It's one's fate. They won't like the connexion at home. She don't care about it one way or another, for all you say; and yet I find myself here again and again. I have a great mind to go this very evening."

"I am writing to her now," Trevithic answered, rather incoherently, after a minute. "The ladies have promised to come with me to-morrow to see the rectory-house at St. Bigot's. I shall call for them about twelve o'clock; and it will take us a quarter of an hour to walk there."

It was a bright autumn morning, glittering and brilliant. Jack stood waiting for Mrs. Myles and her cousin in the little wood at the foot of the garden slope, just behind the lodge. A bird, with outstretched

wings, fluttered from the ivy bed at his feet, and went and perched upon the branch of a tree. All the noises of life came to him from the town, glistening between the gleam of the trees: the fall of the hammer from the woodyard where the men were at work, and the call of the church-bell to prayer, and the distant crow of the farm-yard upon the far-off hill, and the whistle of the engine, starting and speeding through the quiet country valley to the junction in the town, where the great world's gangways met and diverged.

All this daily life was going on, and John Trevithic struck with his stick at a dead branch of a tree. Why was work, so simple and straightforward a business to some honest folks, so tangled and troubled and unsatisfactory to others. In daily life hand labour is simple enough. Old Peascud, down below in the kitchen-garden, turns over mother earth, throbbing with life and all its mysteries, with what he calls a "perty shovel," and pats it down, and complacently thinks it is his own doing that the ivy slips cut off the branch which he has stuck into the ground are growing and striking out fresh roots.

Peascud is only a sort of shovel himself, destined to keep this one small acre, out of the square acres which cover the surface of the earth, in tolerable order, and he does it with a certain amount of spurring and pushing, and when his day's work is over hangs up comfortably on a nail and rests with an easy mind; but Jack, who feels himself a shovel too, has no laws to guide him. Some of the grain he has sown has come up above the ground, it is true, but it is unsatisfactory after all; he does not know whether or not his slips are taking root — one or two of them he has pulled up, like the children do, to see whether they are growing.

As Jack stands moralising, crow cocks, ring bells, strike hammers. It was a fitting chorus, distant and cheerful, and suggestive to the sweet and brilliant life of the lady for whom he waits. Not silence, but the pleasant echoes of life should accompany her steps, the cheerful strains of summer, and the bright colours of spring. Trevithic saw everything brightened and lighted up by her presence, and thought that it was so in fact, poor fellow. Sometimes in a foul ward, when the dull sights and sounds oppressed him almost beyond bearing, with a sudden breath of relief and happiness the image of this charming and beautiful woman would pass before him, sweet and pure, and lovely and unsoiled amidst lovely things, far away

from these ghastly precincts. What had such as she do with such as these? Heaven forbid that so fair a bird, with its tender song and glancing white plumage, should come to be choked and soiled and caged in the foul dungeons to which he felt called. John Trevithic, like many others, exaggerated, I think, to himself the beauty and the ugliness of the things he looked upon as they appeared to others, not that things are not ten thousand times more beautiful and more hideous too, perhaps, than we have eyes to see or hearts to realize, but they are not so far as the eyes with which others see them are concerned. To this sweet and beautiful and graceful woman the world was not so fair a place as to this care-worn man with his haggard eyes and sad knowledge of life. He thought Mrs. Myles so far above him and beyond him in all things, that he imagined that the pains of others must pain her and strike her soft heart more cruelly even than himself, that the loveliness of life was more necessary to her a thousand times than it could be to him.

Meanwhile all the little dried pine-twigs were rustling and rippling, for she was coming down the little steep path, holding up her muslin skirts as she came, and stepping with her rapid slender footsteps, stooping and then looking up to smile. Mrs. Myles was always well-dressed — there was a certain completeness and perfection of dainty smoothness and freshness about all her ways which belonged to her dress and her life and her very loves and dislikes. The soft flutter of her ribbons belong to her as completely as the pointed ends of old Peascud's Sunday shirt-collars and the broad stiff taper of his best waistcoat do to him, or as John Trevithic's fancies as he stands in the fir-wood. Another minute and she is there beside him, holding out her hand and smiling with her sweet still eyes, and the bird flutters away from its branch. "Fanny cannot come," she said. "We must go without her. Mr. Trevithic."

A something, — I cannot tell you what, told Jack as she spoke that this was the last walk they would ever take together. It was one of those feelings we all know and all believe in at the bottom of our hearts. This something coming I know not from whence, going I know not where, suddenly began to speak in the silent and empty chambers of poor Trevithic's heart, echoing mournfully, but with a warning in its echoes that he had never understood before. This something seemed to say, No, No, No. It was like a bell tolling as they walked along the road. Jack led the way, and they

turned off the high-road across a waste, through sudden streets springing up around them, across a bridge over a branch of the railway, into a broad black thoroughfare, which opened into the quiet street leading into Bolton Fields. The fields had long since turned to stones and iron railings enclosing a churchyard, in the midst of which a church had been built. The houses all round the square were quaint red brick dwellings, with here and there a carved lintel to a doorway, and old stone steps whitened and scrubbed by three or four generations of patient housemaids. The trees were bare behind the iron railing, there was silence, though the streets beyond Bolton Fields were busy like London streets. Trevithic stopped at the door of one of the largest of these dwellings. It had straight windows like the others, and broken stone steps upon which the sun was shining, and tall iron railings casting slant shadows on the pavement. It looked quaint and narrow, with its high rooms and blackened bricks, but it stood in sunshine. A child was peeping from one of the many-paned windows, and some birds were fluttering under the deep eaves of the roof.

Jack led the way into the dark-panelled entrance, and opened doors and windows, and ran upstairs. Mrs. Myles fitted here and there, suggested, approved of the quaint old house, with the sunny landings for Dulcie to play on, and the convenient cupboards for her elders, and quaint recesses, and the pleasant hints of an old world, more prosy and deliberate and less prosaic than to-day. There was a pretty little niche on the stairs, where Jack fancied Dulcie perching, and a window looking into the garden; there was a little wooden dining-room, and a study with the worn bookcases let into the walls. It was all in good order, for Trevithic had had it cleaned and scrubbed. The house was more cheerful than the garden at the back, where stone and weeds seemed to be flourishing unmolested.

"It is almost time to go," Mrs. Myles said, looking at her watch.

"You have not half seen the garden," said Trevithic. "Come this way." And Mary followed, wrapping her velvet cloak more closely round her slender shoulders.

They were standing in the little deserted garden of the house, for the garden was all damp, as gardens are which are rarely visited. The back of the house, less cheerful than the front, was close shuttered, except for the windows Trevithic had opened. Some dreary aloe-trees were sprouting their melancholy spikes, a clump of fir-trees and

laurel-bushes was shuddering in one corner ; a long grass-grown lawn, with rank weeds and shabby flower-beds, reached from the black windows to the stony paths, in which, in some unaccountable manner, as is usual in deserted places, the sand and gravel had grown into stones and lumps of earth and clay.

"This is very dreary," said Mrs. Myles, pulling her cloak still closer round her. "I like the house, but no one could be happy walking in this garden."

Trevithic smiled a little sadly. "I don't know," he said. "I don't think happiness depends upon locality."

Poor fellow, his outward circumstances were so prosperous, his inner life so sad and untoward. No wonder that he undervalued external matters, and counted all lost that was not from within.

Mary Myles blushed, as she had a way of blushing when she was moved, and her voice failed into a low measured music of its own. "I envy you," she said. "You do not care like me for small things, and are above the influences of comfort and discomfort, of mere personal gratifications. It has been the curse of my life that I have never risen above anything, but have fallen shamefully before such easy temptations that I am ashamed even to recall them. I wonder what it is like," she said, with her bright, half-laughing, half-admiring smile, "to be, as you are, above small distractions, and able to fight real and great battles — and win them too?" she added, kindly and heartily.

A very faint mist came before Trevithic's eyes as Mary spoke, unconsciously encouraging him, unknowingly cheering him with words and appreciation — how precious she did not know, nor did he dare to tell himself.

"I am afraid what you describe is a sensation very few people know," said Trevithic. "We are all, I suspect, trying to make the best of our defeats; triumphant, if we are not utterly routed."

"And have you been routed at Featherston?" Mrs. Myles asked.

"Completely," said Trevithic. "Anne will retreat with flying colours, but I am ignobly defeated, and only too thankful to run away and come and live here — in this very house perhaps — if she will consent to it."

"Anne is a happy woman to have any one to want her," said Mrs. Myles, coming back to her own thoughts with a sigh; "people love me, but nobody wants me."

"Here is a friend of yours, I think," said

Jack, very quickly, in an odd sort of voice; for as he spoke he saw Hambledon coming in from the passage-door. Mrs. Myles saw him too, and guessed in an instant why Trevithic had detained her. Now in her turn she tried to hold him back.

"Do you believe in expiations, Mr. Trevithic?" said Mary, still strangely excited and beginning to tremble.

"I believe in a grateful heart, and in love and humility, and in happiness when it comes across our way," said Jack, with kind sad eyes, looking admiringly at the sweet and appealing face.

Mary was transformed. She had laid aside all her gentle pride and self-contained sadness: she looked as she must have looked long ago, when she was a girl, humble, imploring, confused; and though her looks seemed to pray him to remain, Trevithic turned away abruptly, and he went to meet Hambledon, who was coming shyly along the weedy path, a tall and prosperous-looking figure in the sunshine and desolation. "You are late," Trevithic said, with a kind, odd smile; "I had given you up." And then he left them and went into the house.

As Jack waited, talking to the house-keeper meanwhile, he had no great courage to ask himself many questions; to look behind; to realize very plainly what had happened; to picture to himself what might have been had fate willed it otherwise. He prayed an honest prayer. "Heaven bless them," he said in his heart, as he turned his steps away and left them together. He waited now patiently, walking in and out of the bare rooms, where people had once lived and waited too, who were gone with their anxious hearts, and their hopes, and their hopeless loves, and their defeats, to live in other houses and mansions which are built elsewhere. Was it all defeat for him? — not all. Had he not unconsciously wronged poor Anne, and given her just cause for resentment; and was anything too late while hope and life remained? If he could not give to his wife a heart's best love and devotion — if she herself had forbidden this — he could give her friendship, and in time the gentle ties of long use and common interest, and Dulcie's dear little arms might draw them closer together — so Jack thought in this softened mood.

John had waited a long time pacing up and down the empty rooms with the faded wire bookcases for furniture, and the melancholy pegs and hooks and wooden slabs which people leave behind them in the

houses they abandon : nearly an hour had passed and the two there out in the garden were talking still by the laurel-bushes. What was he waiting for ? he asked himself presently. Had they not forgotten his very existence ? There was work to be done — he had better go. What had he waited for so long ? What indeed, poor fellow ? he had been longing for a word ; one sign. He only wanted to be remembered : with that strange selfish longing which pities the poor familiar self, he longed for some word of kindness and sign of recognition from the two who had forgotten that anywhere besides in all the world there were hearts that loved or longed or forgot. John trudged away patiently as soon as he had suddenly made clear to himself that it was time to go. He knew the road well enough by this time, and cut off side turnings and came into the town — black and faded even in this brilliant sunshine that was calling the people out of their houses, opening wide windows, drying the rags of clothes, brightening the weary faces. The children clustered round the lamp-posts chattering and playing. One or two people said good-morning to him as he passed, who would have stared sulkily in a fog; the horses in the road seemed to prick their ears, and the fly from the station, instead of crawling wearily along, actually passed him at a trot. Jack turned to look after it : a foolish likeness had struck him. It was but for an instant, and he forgot as he reached the heavy door of the workhouse.

The porter was out, and the old pauper who let Jack in began some story to which he scarcely listened. He was full of the thought of those two there in the garden — happy ! ah, how happy in each other's companionship ; while he, deserted, lonely, discontented, might scarcely own to himself, without sin, that his home was a desolate one ; that his wife was no wife, as he felt it ; that life had no such prospects of love, solace, and sympathy for him, as for some of the most forlorn of the creatures under his care. It was an ill frame of mind coming so quickly after a good one — good work done and peace-making, and a good fight won ; but the very giant he had conquered with pain and struggle, had given him the cap of knowledge, and it pressed and ached upon his brow, and set its mark there. Trevithic put up his hand to his forehead wearily, as he walked along the dull paved courts, and passed through one barred iron door after another. Most of the old folks were sunning themselves upon the benches, and the women were standing gossiping in

the galleries of the house. There are stone galleries at Hammersley, from which the clothes are hung. So he came in here, opening one last iron gate to his office on the ground-floor, at the farther extremity of the great building. It was not very far from the children's wards, and on these fine mornings the little creatures, with their quaint mobcaps and straight bonnets, came scrambling down the flight of steps into the yards. The very young ones would play about a little bo-peep behind an iron grating, or clinging to the skirts of one of the limp figures that were wearily lagging about the place. But the children did not very long keep up their little baby frolics ; sad-faced little paupers in stripe blue dresses would stand staring at Trevithic — with dark eyes gleaming in such world-weighed little faces, that his kind heart ached for them. His favourite dream for them was a children's holiday. It would almost seem that they had guessed his good intentions towards them to-day : a little stream was setting in in the direction of his office, a small group stood watching not far off. It made way before him and disappeared, and then as he came near, he saw that the door was open. A little baby pauper was sitting on the flag and staring in, two other little children had crept up to the very threshold, a third had slipped its fingers into the hinge and was peeping through the chink, and then at the sound of his tired footsteps falling wearily on the pavement, there came a little cry of "Daddy, daddy !" The sweet little voice he loved best in the whole world seemed to fill the room, and Dulcie, his own little Dulcie, came to the door in the sunlight, and clasped him round the knees.

Trevithic, with these little arms to hold him safe, felt as if his complaints had been almost impious. In one minute, indeed, he had forgotten them altogether, and life still had something for him to love and to cling to. The nurse explained matters a little to the bewildered chaplain. Nothing had happened that she knew of. Mrs. Trevithic was gone to look for him. She had driven to Mrs. Myles' straight in the fly from the railway. She had left Miss Dulcie and her there to wait. She had left no message. Mrs. Trevithic had seemed put out like, said the nurse, and had made up her mind all of a sudden. They had slept in London at missis's aunt's. Trevithic was utterly bewildered.

In the meantime it was clear that something must be done for Dulcie, who was getting hungry now that her first little rapture

was over (for raptures are hungry work). After some little demur, Trevithic told the girl to put on Miss Dulcie's cloak again.

While John is talking to Dulcie in his little office, Anne had driven up to the door of the rectory and crossed the threshold of her husband's house. "I want to speak to the lady and gentleman," she said to the woman who let her in. And the housekeeper pointed to the garden and told her she would find them there. Anne, the stupid commonplace woman, was shivering with passion and emotion as she passed through the empty rooms; a few letters were lying on the chimney that John had torn open; the window-shutter was flapping, the wood creaked under her fierce angry footsteps. There, at the end of the path under the holly, stood Mary Myles, and suddenly an angry fevered hand clutched her arm and a fierce flushed face confronted her. "Where is my husband?" hissed Anne. "You did not think that I should come. . . . How dare you take him from me?"

Colonel Hambledon, who had only gone away for a step or two, came back, hearing a voice, with Mary's glove, which she had left on the broken seat where they had been sitting. "What is this?" said he.

"Where is he?" cried the foolish, stupid woman, bursting into tears. "I knew I should find him here with her."

"He has been gone some time, poor fellow," said the Colonel, with a look of repugnance and dislike that Anne saw and never forgot. "Mrs. Trevithic, why do you think such bad thoughts?"

While Mary Myles, indignant in her turn, cried, "Oh, for shame, for shame, Anne Trevithic! You are unkind yourself, and do you dare to be jealous of others? You, who have the best and kindest husband any woman ever had." Mary, as she spoke, clung with both hands to Hambledon's arm, trembling, too, and almost crying. The Colonel, in his happiness, could hardly understand that any one else should be unhappy on such a day. While he was comforting Mary, and entreating her not to mind what that woman had said, Anne, overpowered with shame, conscience-smitten, fled away down the path and through the house — "deadly pale, like a ghost," said the housekeeper afterwards — and drove straight to the workhouse, where she had left her child. As she came to the great door, it opened with a dull sound, and her husband came out carrying little Dulcie in his arms.

"Oh, John! I have been looking for you everywhere," she said, with a little cry, as

with a revulsion of feeling she ran up to him, with outstretched hands. "Where have you been? Mrs. Myles did not know, and I came back for Dulcie. We shall miss the train. Oh, where am I to go?"

Mrs. Trevithic, nervous, fluttered, bewildered, for perhaps the second time in her life, seemed scarcely to know what she was saying — she held up her cheek to be kissed, she looked about quite scared.

"What do you mean by the train, Anne?" her husband said. "Dulcie wants something to eat. Get into the carriage again."

It is difficult to believe — Trevithic himself could not understand it — Anne obeyed without a word. He asked no questions when she burst out with an incoherent, "Oh, John, they were so strange and unkind!" and then began to cry and cry and tremble from head to foot.

It was not till they got to the hotel that Mrs. Trevithic regained her usual composure, and ordered some rooms and lunch off the carte for the whole party. Trevithic never asked what had happened, though he guessed well enough, and when Hambledon told him afterwards that Mrs. Trevithic had burst in upon them in the garden it was no news to poor John.

They had finished their dinner on the ground-floor room of the quiet old inn. Little Dulcie was perched at the window watching the people as they crossed and recrossed the wire-blind. A distant church clock struck some quarters, the sound came down the street, and Trevithic pulled out his watch with a smile, saying, "I think you will be too late for your train, Anne, today." Anne's heart gave a throb as he spoke. She always thought people in earnest, and she looked up wistfully and tried to speak; but the words somehow stuck in her throat. Meanwhile Trevithic jumped up in a sudden flusher. It was later than he imagined. He had his afternoon service at the workhouse to attend to. It was Friday, and he must go. He had not a moment to lose, so he told his wife in a word as he seized his hat, and set off as hard as he could go. He had not even a moment to respond to little Dulcie's signals of affection, and waves and capers behind the wire-blind.

Anne, who had been in a curious maze all this time, sitting in her place at the table and watching him, and scarcely realizing the relief of his presence as he busied himself in the old way for her comfort and Dulcie's, carving the chicken and waiting on them both, understood all at once how

great the comfort of his presence had been. In her dull, sleepy way, she had been basking in sunshine for the last two hours, after the storm of the night before. She had untied her bonnet, and thrown it down upon a chair, and forgotten to smooth her sleek hair; her collar and ribbons were awry; her very face had lost its usual pliability,—it was altered and disturbed, and yet Jack thought he had never liked her looks so well, though he had never seen her so ruffled and self-forgetful in all the course of his married life.

For the moment Mrs. Trevithic was strangely happy in this odd reunion. She had almost forgotten at the instant the morning's jealousy and mad expedition—Colonel Hambledon's look of scorn and Mary Myles' words—in this new unknown happiness. It seemed to her that she had never in her life before realized what the comfort might be of some one to love, to hold, to live for. She watched the quick clever hands dispensing the food for which, to tell the truth, she had no very great appetite, though she took all that her husband gave her. Had some scales fallen from her pale wondering eyes? As he left the room she asked herself in her stupid way, what he had meant. Was this one little glimpse of home the last that she would ever know? was it all over, all over? Anne tied her bonnet on again, and telling the maid to take care of little Dulcie, went out into the street again and walked off in the direction of the chapel. She had a sudden wish to be there. She did not know that they would admit her; but no difficulties were made, and she passed under the big arch. Some one pointed out the way, and she pushed open a green baize door and went in; and so Anne knelt in the bare little temple where the paupers' prayers were offered up—humble prayers and whitewash that answer their purpose as well perhaps as Gothic, and iron castings, and flamboyant windows, and the beautiful clear notes of the choristers answering each other and bursting into triumphal utterance. The paupers were praying for their daily bread, hard, and dry, and butterless; for forgiveness for trespasses grosser and blacker perhaps than ours; for deliverance from evil of which Anne and others besides never realized; and ending with words of praise and adoration which we all use in truth, but which mean far, far more when uttered from that darkness upon which the divine light beams most splendidly. Anne for the first time in her life was kneeling a pauper

in spirit, ashamed and touched, and repentant.

There was no sermon, and Mrs. Trevithic got up from her knees and came away with her fellow-petitioners and waited in the courtyard for John. The afternoon sun of this long eventful day was shining on the stones and casting the shadows of the bars and bolts, and brightening sad faces of the old men and women, and the happy faces of two people who had also attended the service, and who now advanced arm-in-arm to where Anne was standing. She started back as she first saw them: they had been behind her in the chapel, and she had not known that they were there.

The sight of the two had brought back with it all the old feeling of hatred, and shame, and mistrust; all the good that was in her seemed to shrink and shrivel away for an instant at their approach, and at the same time came a pang of envious longing. They seemed so happy together; so *one*, as, with a glance at one another, they both came forward. Was she all alone when others were happy? had she not of her own doing put her husband away from her, and only come to him to reproach and leave him again? For a woman of such obstinacy and limited perception as Mrs. Trevithic to have settled that a thing was to be, was reason enough for it to happen; only a longing, passionate longing, came, that it might be otherwise than she had settled; that she might be allowed to stay—and a rush of the better feelings that had overcome her of late kept her there waiting to speak to these two who had scorned her.

"I want to ask you to forgive me," said Mary, blushing, "anything I may have said. Your husband has done us both such service, that I can't help asking you for his sake to forget my hastiness."

"You see we were taken aback," said the Colonel, not unkindly. "Shake hands, please, Mrs. Trevithic, in token that you forgive us, and wish us joy. I assure you we are heartily sorry if we pained you." Anne flushed and flushed and didn't speak, but put out her hand,—not without an effort. "Are you going back directly, or are you going to stay with your husband?" said the Colonel, shaking her heartily by the hand.

Poor Anne looked up, scared, and shrank back once more,—she could not bear to tell them that she did not know. She turned away all hurt and frightened, looking about for some means of escape, and then at that moment she saw that John was

coming up to them across the yard from the office where he had gone to leave his surveillance. "Oh, John," she said, still bewildered, and going to meet him, and with a piteous face, "here are Colonel Hambleton and Mary."

"We have come to ask for your congratulations," the Colonel said, laughing and looking very happy; "and to tell you that your match-making has been successful."

Mary Myles did not speak, but put out her hand to Trevithic.

Mrs. Trevithic meanwhile stood waiting her sentence.' How new the old accustomed situations seem as they occur again and again in the course of our lives. Waters of sorrow overwhelm in their depths, as do the clear streams of tranquil happiness, both rising from distant sources, and flowing on either side of our paths. As I have said, the sight of these two, in their confidence and sympathy, filled poor Anne's heart with a longing that she had never known before. Mary Myles, I think, guessed what was passing in the other's mind — women feel one another's passing emotions — but the good Colonel was utterly unconscious.

"We have been asking your wife if she remains with you, or if she is going back directly," said he. "I thought perhaps you would both come to dine with us before we go."

There was a mist before Anne's eyes, an unspeakable peace in her heart, as Jack drew her hand through his arm, and said, in his kind voice, "Of course she stays; I am not going to let my belongings go away again, now that I have got them here."

As they were walking back to the inn together, Anne told her husband of her morning's work, and John sighed as he listened.

"We have both something to forgive," he said once more, looking at her with his kind speaking eyes.

Anne winced and looked away, and then her heart turned again, and she spoke and said, with real sensibility, —

"I have nothing to forgive, John. I thought you were in the wrong, but it was I from the beginning."

After a little time Trevithic and Anne and Dulcie went to live together in the old house in Bolton Fields. The woman was humbled, and did her best to make her husband's home happy, and John too remembered the past, and loved his wife, with all her faults, and did not ask too much of her, and kept clear, as best he could, of possible struggles and difficulties. His life was hard,

but blows and fatigue he did not grudge, so long as he could help to deliver the land. Foul caverns were cleansed, ignorant monsters were routed, dark things were made light. He was not content in his parish to drive away evil; he tried his best and strove to change it, and make it into good. These tangible dragons and giants were hard to fight, but once attacked they generally succumbed in the end, and lost perhaps one head, or a claw in each successive encounter, and then other champions rose up, and by degrees the monster began to fall and dwindle away. But poor Trevithic's work is not over. Another giant is coming to meet him through the darkness. He is no hideous monster of evil like the rest; his face is pitiless, but his eyes are clear and calm. His still voice says, "Hold," and then it swells by degrees, and deafens all other sound. "I am a spirit of truth, men call me evil because I come out of the darkness," the giant cries; "but see my works are good as well as bad! See what bigotry, what narrow prejudice, what cruelty and wickedness and intolerance I have attacked and put to rout." In the story-book it is Jack who is the conqueror; he saws through the bridge by which the giant approaches, and the giant falls into the moat and is drowned. But, as far as I can see, the Jacks of this day would rather make a way for him than shut him out; some of the heroes who have tried to saw away the bridge have fallen into the moat with their enemy, and others are making but a weak defence, and in their hearts would be glad to admit him into the palace of the King.

Mrs. Trevithic rarely goes into the garden at the back of her house. The other day, being vexed with her husband about some trifling matter, she followed him out to remonstrate. He was standing with Dulcie by the prickly holly-tree that she remembered so well, and seeing her coming he put out his hand with a smile. The words of reproach died away on Anne's lips, and two bright spots came into her cheeks, as with a very rare display of feeling she suddenly stooped and kissed the hand that held hers.

As I finish the story of Jack Trevithic, which, from the play in which it began, has turned to earnest, H. looks up from her knitting, and says that it is very unsatisfactory, and that she is getting tired of calling everything by a different name; and she thinks she would like to go back to the realities of life again. In my dream-world they have been forgotten, for the fire is nearly out, and

the grey mist is spreading along the streets.
It is too dark to write any more — an organ
is playing a dismal tune, a carriage is roll-
ing over the stones; so I ring the bell for
the lamp and the coals, and Susan comes in
to shut the shutters.

From Macmillan's Magazine,
ROBIN AND MAGGIE: AN IDYL.

BY R. M. HOVENDEN.

THE RUSTIC LOVER.

Ron looks on while Maggie works,
Follows every stitch of sewing;
Robin fidgets, Robin jerks,
Stammers — "Now, I must be going."

Maggie with a saucy glance
Sets his heart and face a-glowing:
She'll lead him a pretty dance
With his — "Now, I must be going."

Robin sits till milking-time;
Listens to the pigeons cooing;
Not a word in prose or rhyme,
Only — "Now, I must be going."

Maggie kilts her linsey-coats,
Such a pair of ankles showing;
On those ankles Robin doats,
Yet he says — "I must be going."

Maggie takes the milking-stool,
Pail across her shoulder throwing;
Robin follows, like a fool,
Vowing still — "I must be going."

Out together in the byre,
Where the heavy kine are lowing,
Robin's brain is all a-fire,
Spite of — "Now, I must be going."

Maggie's ear's against the cow,
Both hands keep the milk a-flowing.
What a chance for Robin now!
Can he say — "I must be going?"

Maggie's lip begins to pout,
Pique into vexation growing: —
"Robin, you're a sheepish lout;
Laddie, sure you're long o' going."

FLOWERS.

MAGGIE once with Robin lingered
Near the borders edged with box;
Supple-waisted, dainty-fingered,
Maggie clift a truss of phlox.
And, because the milk-white flowers
From her touch a glory take,
Robin, in his lonely hours,
Keeps and loves them for her sake.

Robin wakes, while Maggie slumbers,
All his heart and soul adrift,
Till he sets to tuneful numbers
His gra'mercy for the gift.
Happy phiox! To win a treasure
From the lip that thou hast kissed;
Luckless verse! at best a pleasure
Soon forgotten, never missed.

CHAFF.

"**THANK** you, Robin, for your letter,
Though the verses are but lame;
Maybe I should like them better
If by word of mouth they came.
As for what you call the glory
Shed on phloxes by my touch,
That's a very pretty story,
But I don't believe it — much.

"Then you say you loved them, kept them,
For her sake who gave them you: —
Who told you my lips had swept them ?
Nonsense, Rob, it isn't true.
If they had, O arch deceiver!
Still your triumph would be brief;
For I reckon a receiver
Little better than a thief."

UNDER THE LIME TREE.

MAGGIE sits beneath a lime,
Where the bees are ever humming;
Maggie's true to trysting-time,
Surely Robin must be coming.

Robin, not a mile away,
Keeps behind the fence demurely;
Loth to go, afraid to stay,
Yet his heart is with her, surely.

Maggie plies the knitting-pins,
How they flash between her fingers!
Pride and anger, mortal sins,
Grow apace while Robin lingers.

Rob, unseen, in ambush stands,
Wonders who's to wear the stocking;
Gazes on her busy hands,
And the tiny foot a-rocking.

Maggie drops the knitting down;
Crafty Robin hears her sighing:
After one indignant frown
Pretty Maggie falls a-crying.

Robin from his covert slips,
Robin throws an arm about her;
Kisses thrice her eyes and lips,
Vows he'd rather die than flout her.

Maggie dries her hazel eyes,
Whispers low: "My heart is aching :
Rob," she sighs, "be true and wise,
Keep and care for what you're taking."

"Maggie, I've been over-bold,
And you think so, don't deny it:
I'll restore you twenty fold" —
"No, no, Robin; there, be quiet."

TWO HEARTS.

"WHEN Maggie took my heart into her own,
'Twas better far than if the two were parted;
So dead-alive my heart was, all alone,
That none could say my love was double-hearted,
When Maggie hid my heart within her own.

"Some day, perhaps, when long sojourn with
her

Has made it whole, she will restore my heart,
Or give back half of each : how strange it were!
To know my heart of hers the counterpart !
And very sweet, dear love, that strangeness
were."

"Kind Robin, when your heart became my
guest,

I vowed a vow that heart in mine to cherish,
And bade it enter in and be at rest.

Forsworn were I if that dear heart should
perish,

By my default, once welcomed as a guest.

"I give my heart, in fair exchange, for yours ;
No halving, lest our true intent be thwarted,
But all for all, a compact that endures.

A love like ours can never be half-hearted,
So take my heart, in fair exchange, for yours."

From Blackwood's Magazine.

THE NIGHT-WANDERER OF AN AFGHAUN FORT.

I ALMOST fancy I hear the critical and fastidious reader exclaiming, "Under what pretence has the description of a few days' visit to a fort situated in an obscure valley of the distant Elbooz and in the remote East found a place in the revered pages of Maga ? Has not the tide of modern literature, at least its lighter portion, followed of recent years the tide of emigration ? Has it not flowed west in this century as it went east in the days when Voltaire wrote 'Zadig ?' Has not the negro superseded the fakir, the prairie the jungle, the setting the rising sun ? And are not tales of rapacious Bedooeens and stifling simooms and thirsty caravans now a mere drug in the literary market ? whereas, tinged with the once loved halo of Eastern romance, they were wont to make our grandmothers' ears to tingle when they were little girls." With reasonings similar to these ringing in my ears, I lay the following pages before the public with the greatest possible hesitation, for I cannot but feel apprehensive that in these

days an Eastern story will scarcely be deemed a desideratum in Western literature.

The reader shall not be wearied with any precise relation of the circumstances which once led to my being for some days the honoured guest of an Afghaun chief.* To those circumstances in themselves no particular interest now attaches itself, nor were they in any way connected with the events of which I am about to attempt a description in the following pages. These events came under my immediate observation during the period of my visit, and they have ever remained indelibly fixed upon my memory from the fact of their having been involved in a certain mystery, which at the time of their occurrence strongly excited and aroused my curiosity and attention. Suffice it to say that many years ago I found myself approaching, after a long night's ride, and just as day was breaking, one of those gloomy gorges that abound in the vast range of the Elbooz Mountains. Only those who have experienced the discomorts that are usually attendant upon a long night passed in the saddle are aware how eagerly the weary and wayworn traveller awaits the approach of day, and with what joy he welcomes the first glad glimmer of the dawn. When the momentarily increasing light afforded me an opportunity of looking upon that which for so many hours had been hidden under the impenetrable veil of night, I saw that a bleak and inhospitable region lay behind and on both sides of me. The desolate plain stretching itself monotonously away resembled a sea whose distant shores on three sides were merged and lost to view in the low-lying hazy mists of early day. The parched and thirsty soil was pierced only here and there by some few stunted bushes of the asafetida-plant, whose branches, totally void of verdure, were like a skeleton's bones, so white, bare, and bleached did they look in the cold light of the young morning. In front, and distant about a mile, were some rugged slopes and hills that beyond assumed the proportions of a lofty chain of mountains, beneath some of whose snow-capped peaks fleecy rings of cloud and vapour rested. By the time that the stars, my companions throughout the night, had paled and absolutely vanished in the brilliant light that so marvellously soon had steeped all things in hea-

* Though dwelling in Persian territory, the occupants of the fort were Afghauns. Their ancestors about a century previous had left their own country, and having settled in Persia had become tributary to that power.

ven and on earth, my eyes, longing to catch a glimpse of the fort to which I was wending my way, were busy straining anxiously towards the spot where the beaten track under my horse's feet plunged amid the hills and so lost itself to view. And though to my disappointment it was impossible to trace the road any further than this spot, I could make out something of its general direction by allowing my gaze to follow what looked like a deep black shadow darkening the mountain-side. This shadow as it appeared with clearly depicted edges trended upwards, and after some few bold zig-zags finally ended in a point sharp as a needle's, not far below the region where eternal snows glittered in the glorious rays that heralded the approach of the great god of day, as yet himself invisible. The dark mass, sharply traced as its edges were, was all that it was then possible for me to see of a great gorge that like a mighty sabre gash cleft the brawny flank of the mountain, and which, from information I was in possession of, I concluded contained somewhere in its gloomy depths the fort to which I was bound. But as to the distance that still lay between me and my morning's goal I was ignorant, and so I remained till I and my small party of followers arrived within half-a-mile or so of the foot of the hills in our front. Then as I rode gazing at the rugged majesty of the mountain sides that reared themselves a stupendous barrier across the road, my attention was attracted by a party of horsemen debouching from the hills in single file into the plain below. These horsemen, to the number of some thirty or forty, as far as I could judge from a hurried estimation I made of them, no sooner appeared to feel level ground beneath their horses' feet than they threw themselves into a broken and irregular line and came sweeping towards me. So suddenly had they come into view, and so rapidly were they approaching, that I had scarcely time to look round and range my small party of followers in front of the baggage-mules when the shouts of the leading horsemen and the wild music of kettledrums reached my ears. From the tactics of the swiftly advancing line I soon became aware that no hostile attack was intended. A few shots indeed were fired, but the long, slender "jezails" were pointed sometimes straight at the heart of a curveting comrade in the ranks, sometimes swung round to the rear, over the streaming courser's tail as if to dispose of an imaginary pursuing enemy. On they came, galloping madly onwards, leaving long lines of dust behind them, and

presenting in the bright morning light a most spirited and imposing pageant. The chiefs of the party, riding slightly in advance of the line, were conspicuous in the centre. They rode with loose rein, but when they had approached to a distance of about fifty yards or so of my party they pulled up with a jerk so sharp and sudden that their steeds, furrowing the dry gravelly soil with their hind feet, were brought to an almost instantaneous halt. From these preliminaries, added to the fact that the horsemen were commencing to range themselves in line along the road, it became at once evident that this was the escort that had been sent out to meet me and conduct me to the Fort. I knew that, this being the case, it would be becoming in me to dismount and meet the two chiefs on foot. I perceived they had already thrown themselves from their saddles and were striding across the plain with that peculiar waddling gait which the Afghans either affect or cannot avoid when they attempt to walk in their long pointed boots, which were never meant to grace anything but a horseman's legs. Before I had taken a dozen steps I was embraced by the younger of the two men in true Afghaun fashion. This consisted of his throwing his arms round my waist and resting his chin first on my right shoulder and then on my left, I doing the like by him. In the space of a few minutes, the "Khoosh amudeed," the usual welcome, having been given and the ordinary salutations having been addressed in the Persian language, we had remounted and were jogging on our way to the hills in front of us. As we rode along I had ample time to scan the features and dress of my two companions. The younger of the horsemen, who I learned was the son of the chief in whose house I was shortly to be a guest, was tall, straight as a cypress, and with singularly handsome. I guessed him to be about five-and-twenty, but he was scarcely twenty, as he afterwards informed me. He wore a loose flowing brown-coloured cloak made of the soft hair of the mountain-goat. It was fastened across the chest, but the long folds below the fastening were thrown back, and showed beneath a richly brocaded coat made of the finest European cloth. This, sitting close to his figure, displayed his broad shoulders and slender waist to the utmost advantage. Through the folds of a Cachemire shawl which served as a girdle, were passed a brace of silver-mounted pistols and a formidable-looking double-edged dagger. In addition to these arms he wore a sword, and a fowling-piece of English

manufacture was slung obliquely across his back. His turban of blue shawl and of the finest texture was wound loosely about the head, the worked ends hanging down picturesquely over his shoulders behind. His boots, made of the wild-ass's skin, were of a light buff colour, and reached almost to the knee. They were very pointed at the toe, and with heels so long and small that walking in them must have been something akin to torture. The young chief was evidently a most finished horseman. His followers, with spears levelled and matchlocks unslung, had spread themselves over the plain and were going through a variety of warlike evolutions. Every now and then one of them would dash across the road and fire his matchlock immediately in front of us, causing the young chief's horse to rear and plunge and snatch at the sharp bit in a way that put even his horsemanship to the test. But he managed the hot-blooded young animal beneath him at all times with consummate temper and skill. The other of my companions, who now rode upon my left, was a man of very different aspect. A spare shrivelled remnant of a man who appeared quite at home in the saddle, but to whom, heavy beetling brows, a malignant eye, and a Mephistopheles hook to his nose, gave certainly no prepossessing appearance. He was simply attired, and as he rode along his whole thoughts seemed to be concentrated in the attempts that he momentarily made to keep himself protected by his cloak from the chill blasts of the morning air that swept every now and then in sharp gusts across the plain. His reception of me, I remarked, had been cold and distant as compared with that given me by his younger companion. And since we had remounted he had not attempted to address another remark to me of any kind. The young chief, Firamoorz Khan, several times bantered him on his moody silence, but the only answer the old man vouchsafed consisted of a few words that were quite unintelligible, muttered as they were from beneath the voluminous folds of his cloak, under which all but his eyes and nose were buried. When we reached the hills and had ascended a little way up the first slope, Firamoorz asked me to turn round and look at the play of his horsemen in the plain below. It was of a most spirited and exciting character. Upon the wide level plain that had looked so desolate and lifeless when I had first beheld it in the morning, a mimic battle was being enacted, in which each horseman, fighting independently of his comrades,

attacked or retired as fancy urged. One of these horsemen, dressed in a close-fitting tunic of dark blue, and armed with a shield, matchlock, and sword, particularly attracted my attention. With reins hanging loose from the saddle-bow, he urged his horse to his utmost speed. At times he would use his matchlock, firing it as he galloped along in every position that it was possible for a horseman to throw himself into, and regain his seat in the saddle. At other times, having slung his matchlock obliquely behind him, and covering his body with his shield, he would draw his sword — the curved scimitar of Khorassan — and keeping it in perpetual movement, would cause it to flicker and gleam and make lines of fire in the brilliant sunlight that now poured over the plain. The horseman, the carrier of the kettledrums, ponderous-looking things swathed in scarlet cloth, had followed us up the slope. He had been standing behind us motionless as a statue, but at a signal from Firamoorz he commenced violently to agitate his wrists, and so the thunder of the drums pealing forth, the mimic fight below came to an end. The horsemen then, reining in their steeds, came trooping leisurely up the hill towards the spot where we were, and a gaily-dressed, bright-eyed boy having approached Firamoorz, placed a hawk upon his wrist. The order of march was resumed, and by a tortuous winding path we made our way through the hills. From the highest summits of these hills the "teehoo" every now and then sent forth his plaintive and melancholy note. And whenever one of these birds, a sort of small mountain partridge, was flushed by our approach, the hawk was slipped. He seldom failed in bringing the quarry to the ground, so swift and sure was his flight. A horseman would then dash forward over rocks and stones, seize the fluttering helpless thing, and turning towards Mecca the holy, would cut his throat with all possible and orthodox ceremony.

Firamoorz had told me that, from the spot where his party had first met me, his father's fort was distant some two hours' ride; or, as I reckoned it, about seven miles. So that by the time we reached the opening of the great gorge that I had seen and traced in the early morning, the sun's rays were touching the rocky saw-like crest of its western side. Our road, ascending rapidly, clung to the precipitous side of the gorge, whose uppermost edge glowed in light; but where we rode we were in the deep shadow of the opposite side, which towered aloft like a wall above us. Beneath was a

brawling torrent, that every here and there as it leapt from one big boulder to another, formed between them those glassy black pools which are

"The torrent's stillness ere it rush below."

As we proceeded, the gorge contracted, its sides shooting up perpendicularly on both sides, so that we could see only a narrow slip of the bright blue sky above. But, much as I was struck with the wild and savage beauty of the scene, there was not much time, or I should rather say leisure, to look about one, for the path we were pursuing was so steep, and the face of the rock across which it lay so smooth and slippery, that my attention was fully occupied in keeping my horse upon his legs. Where your stirrup-iron dangles over a precipice, scenery loses a certain portion of the attraction which it would otherwise possess. I glanced at the dark silent pools below and the jagged sides of the gorge, but my most earnest gaze was fixed on the great boulders of rock nearer at hand, and over which we were scrambling and clattering. And when we had passed some unusually bad bit of the road without accident I could not avoid looking ahead and praying that better travelling was near. In consequence of its being impossible for a considerable distance for two horsemen to ride abreast, we went in single file, Firamoorz immediately preceding me. Many a time I trembled for the safety of the young chief, for his hot-blooded fiery steed, rendered impatient by the oft-recurring irregularities of the path, rushed at the great boulders we were crossing in a manner that made it appear inevitable that sooner or later his legs would slip from under him; and a fall on such a road could not have had well other than consequences most fatal. I silently wondered at the calm self-possession, nerve, and temper of the young chief under the circumstances. As if deeming that the animal was perfectly cognisant of the danger that threatened from the yawning gulf below, he seldom or never checked him with the bit, leaving him to his own wild way of surmounting all obstacles. When I say that the art of shoeing horses is at its very rudest stage among the Afghauns, — simply a flat piece of iron nailed over the hoof, — it will be at once understood what a disadvantage a horse so shod labours under when crossing rocky ground.

Whenever conversation was practicable, Firamoorz did not fail to enliven the way with his remarks. My English hunting-sad-

dle particularly attracted his astonishment and curiosity. He seemed to think it was made of wood. About it and my dress he made many quaint and original remarks. His frank manner and the brusque informal way in which he let me know what was passing in his mind was vastly amusing, and contrasted agreeably with the customs and manner of speech of the Persians — a people of whom I had shortly previous had some experience, and to whom Rochefoucauld's saying, that "words were meant to conceal our thoughts," most pertinently applies. Looking at my old well-worn saddle, he said it was the first he had ever seen, and he wondered that I should prefer to ride on a thing so small and with a surface so glossy and slippery, instead of upon one such as he was using, where the rider had plenty of room to turn round and shift himself about in, and where the knee pressed a surface that was both rough and soft. But with the stirrup-irons he was particularly pleased, and he frankly declared that, in his estimation, they were worth more than all the saddles "Feringestan" could produce.

Our progress, owing to the roughness of the road, was at times but slow, so that the sun was high in the heavens before we reached the turn in the gorge whence the Fort of the young chief's father was visible. From this point it appeared directly in front of us, but on the other side of the gorge, which here opened out to a breadth of a mile or so, revealing behind a grand panorama of mountains piled on mountains. We made an abrupt descent till we came to a ford in the stream, where the horses of the party, many of them still bearing traces of their morning's gallop, were allowed a copious drink of water. On the opposite side, gently ascending to the walls of the "Killaug" or fort, was an open bit of ground. Over this the Afghaun horsemen, clapping their heavy stirrup-irons to their horses' sides, galloped some three or four times at speed. This galloping a horse for some ten minutes or so at his best pace, immediately after he has been watered, renders him, at least so say the Afghauns and Turcomans, hardy, and greatly improves his wind. As we rode up the open space, with the horsemen galloping hither and thither, some small cannon, mounted on the walls of the Fort, bellowed out a rude welcome, which, being caught by a multitude of echoes, boomed solemnly away, and was lost amid the distant rocky peaks. The Fort of F—— appeared to be built of sunburnt brick throughout — a large massive and ancient

structure, with bastions and connecting curtains which in some places were loopholed for defence. The muzzles of the guns that were being fired projected slightly from the parapet, on the top of which they rested. At each discharge, a cloud of something which was not smoke, issued from beneath the muzzle. On approaching nearer, it was evident that the concussion of each discharge brought down a piece of the wall, a matter apparently of but small moment to the Afghaun artillerymen, who were to be seen busy above the guns, loading and firing away with the utmost indifference to the damage that was being done to the defences. As we finally entered the massive gateway, we brushed by the inhabitants, old and young, men, women, and children, who were standing crowding both sides of the entrance. The men were mostly strong, sturdy-looking fellows, with a rude glow of health upon their cheeks. They were clad in coarse-coloured linen, with a sheepskin jacket or cloak hitched upon their shoulders, the arms hanging down empty behind, like those of a hussar jacket. Of the women, generally speaking, no portion of the features was visible. A white thick veil fell over the eyes, and the figure was entirely enveloped in blue drapery. Here and there amongst the crowd might be seen a hand wrinkled with toil and old age, holding down the veil with a determination so severe that it would have baffled the very eye of a lynx to catch even a glimpse of the possessor's faded charms. Interspersed among the gazing groups were the "Reesh-Suffeed," the grey-beards of the place, who, with heads swathed in ponderous turbans, looked as picturesque and patriarchal as if they had stepped down from some old Italian fresco. The children, some of them ruddy and beautiful, ran forward, clapped their hands, and looked half in wonderment, half in alarm, at the novel sight of a white face and a pith helmet. The dust raised by our horses' tread, as we passed under the massive gateway, was stifling. We rode through a small bazaar, whose principal commodities appeared to be dried fruits and grain, and whose principal occupants were ragged beggars, who had located themselves in every point of vantage-ground upon our road. These, as we passed, struck their breasts, and then stood with upturned palms while they called down the blessings of Allah upon our heads. After a ride of a few hundred yards, we found ourselves on the edge of the great moat that surrounded the keep or citadel of the place. Here the young chief rode forward, and, making a signal to

some "Sirbauz,"* who were lounging about on the other side, a drawbridge was let down, and we clattered over the rough uneven planks like a troop of horsemen entering a castle of some feudal lord of the middle ages. In a small yard, immediately inside the main wall of the citadel, we dismounted, and Firamoorz, taking me by the hand, and pronouncing many a "Bismillah," led me into the interior. As I looked behind me I saw the drawbridge being slowly raised, and then, as the great bolts fell with a loud clang, I felt that, though a guest, I was for the time being a prisoner. Firamoorz, familiar with every turn and twist of the tortuous way, walked forward with a quick step; but, as the passages along which we went were ill-lighted, and some not lighted at all, a slower pace would to me have been preferable; for a long ride had left me cramped and stiff, so that I more than once stumbled over the irregularities of the ground. As far as I could judge, we were passing along under some of the principal buildings of the citadel. At length my guide, taking me up a flight of rude stone steps, brought me into a small yard. On the other side of this yard was the room that had been allotted to me as the place of my abode during my stay in the Fort. Here Firamoorz left me, but not before he had told me that the bath would be ready, and at my disposal, in an hour.

When the young Chief had taken his departure, I took the opportunity of looking about me to see whereabouts I was in the citadel, the principal points of which I had scanned from the exterior as we entered. I found I was at a large bastion at the southwest angle. The yard to which we had ascended formed part of the summit of the bastion, and a parapet, more or less broken, led round it. The door through which we had entered was at the base of what looked like an old deserted dwelling, for the wooden shutters, which had closed the apertures of the windows, had been partially rent away, leaving the interior exposed. The walls were cracked and crumbling, presenting throughout a ruined and dilapidated appearance. Of windows in my room there were two — one overlooking the moat of the keep; the other was on the side of the terrace, and raised above its level some three or four feet. They were mere apertures. Glass there was none; but a rude wooden shutter half closed the terrace window. My apartment, which had evidently not

* Lit., Player with the hand.

been inhabited for a long time, bore traces of having been swept and garnished. Water had been sprinkled upon the mud floor, and across the upper end of the room was spread a felt cloth, of great thickness and value, and bright with the hue of all the colours of the rainbow. This and a large silk-covered pillow, which rested against the wall, was the simple furniture of the room. In a few minutes my Persian servants had spread my bed, poised my basin upon its tripod stand, and placed with some ceremony upon the floor the few books that composed my library. These, the preliminaries of my taking up my abode, being duly settled and arranged, the chamber, with its brown mud walls and dilapidated windows, had soon a homely appearance for me.

About an hour had elapsed when the apparition of a handsome well-dressed Afghan at the door warned me that the promised bath was ready. I was up in an instant, for I knew of old the comfort that an hour or so of parboiling and shampooing brought to aching bones and weary muscles. Outside in the little yard were grouped some four or five retainers of the young Chief. They were all armed to the teeth, and after the Afghan had marshalled them into order, it looked, when we all walked silently away together, as if we were bent on some desperate deed of blood, rather than for the peaceful purpose of a bath. We marched away with all due solemnity to that part of the citadel in which I was informed the young Chief's apartments and "Anderoon" * were situated. Through dark passages, up crumbling steps, across little open terraces from which we looked up and caught a glimpse of lofty windowless walls, we made our way to the little honeycomb chambers that formed the "Hummaum" or bath of the Chief's dwelling. My attendants having here left me, I speedily surrendered myself to a tall gaunt man, who, stripped naked to the waist, was waiting for my arrival. In the space of a few minutes he had dressed me much in the same fashion in which he himself was clad. A gay-coloured cotton sheet was wound about my lower limbs, and then, being pulled tight at the waist, was fastened in the twinkling of an eye in a knot wonderfully firm and artistic. Another sheet was wrapped loosely but carefully about my head; and so accoutréed, and shuffling over the tiled floor in wooden shoes, I accompanied my gaunt friend, who took me by the hand

into a small inner chamber. In this chamber nothing was visible through the moist warm vapour that enveloped all things, save a round aperture in the dome-like roof above. An intense discomfort of a few minutes, during which a sense pervaded me that the blood of the whole body had suddenly rushed into and filled the veins of my head; a short and sharp battle with the powers of darkness and pungent soap; a feeling of utter and hopeless prostration amounting almost to faintness, quickly followed by a sensation that the laquid life stealing back upon me was a dear treasure worth possessing — nay, more, a blessing to be humbly grateful for; — these things, one and all, satisfied me that the man, portions of whose gaunt frame I had every now and then fancied I had caught a glimpse of through the misty darkness of the bath, was an artist of no mean pretensions, and one who, though living in this obscure mountain fort, might rank among the best and most skilled "hummaumchees" of Isfahan. During the delightful sense of comfort and repose that followed the bath, I trifled with some coffee, very black and very bitter, a kaileeoon of indifferent tobacco, a huge water-melon, and a tray of sweet-meats. These last were snow-white and of all shapes. But the round ones, while they were the most palatable, were at the same time of a consistency so curious, that one could only break them by laying them flat in the palm of one hand, while you struck at them with the edge of another. In this way they broke at once like a biscuit. Any other attempt to break them, and they resolved themselves into something the consistency of india-rubber, and then their motto was "frangas, non flectes."

The young Chief had told me that during my stay in his father's fort I was to consider myself entirely as his guest. Nothing in the way of food, either for my servants or horses, or for myself, was to be purchased. In the evening when I walked down to the spot where my horses had been picketed, I found them amply supplied with barley and chopped straw. My two Persian grooms were sitting on their heels, wearing all the appearance of men who had been well fed. Even the muleteers, who so frequently, by reason of their inscrutable whims, tend to embitter the life of a traveller in these countries, appeared for once in a way to be happy and contented, and wanting nothing. As the sun touched the rocky horizon that bounded the view on the west, I wended my way along the ramparts, back to my

* Women's apartments.

apartments, so as to meet the young Chief, who had promised to pay me a visit an hour before the "shaum," or evening meal.

He came attended by the old man who had accompanied him in the morning, and by several armed retainers. These took up their position along the wall of the terrace outside of the room, but the old man, whom I soon learned was called the "Oozeer," entered with Firamoorz, and took his seat beside him on the felt cloth. Firamoorz examined with great curiosity every single article of European manufacture that I possessed, and with the greatest freedom asked all manner of questions regarding the use that was made of them. A few rough sketches in water colours that were in my book pleased him much, and he insisted upon my making a picture of him shooting an antelope, with the least possible delay, that he might present the same to his father. I told him I would try next morning to make a picture of him, such as he desired to have. The delay seemed to cause him great disappointment, for, pointing to my colour-box, which lay open before him, he said, that with the colours all ready as they appeared to be, he should have thought the picture might have been done at once. As it had happened in the morning, so it happened now, that the old man maintained a reserved silence, but every now and then I remarked he raised his overhanging penthouse brows, and I could see the somewhat sinister gleam of his eye as he stole an observant curious glance around the room. After half an hour's pleasant but somewhat boisterous conversation, Firamoorz withdrew, having previously arranged the hour at which I was to pay a visit of ceremony the next morning to his aged father. As they left I observed the old Oozeer step off the felt carpet, and walk quickly to that end of the room where the window was which looked down into the moat below. From out of this window he cast a downward glance, and then, apparently satisfied, he caught up the skirt of his long flowing cloak, and stepped briskly away after his young Chief.

For my evening repast several savoury dishes were brought to me straight from the "Anderoon,"—roast and stewed lamb smothered in rice and raisins, various succulent vegetables cooked in oil, and some plates of cooked and raw fruit. The exertions of the gaunt man in the bath had endowed me with so good an appetite that I did ample justice to the excellent dishes set before me. When I had finished, the

many-coloured and well-stained tablecloth * was carried away by one of the servants of Firamoorz, but the large pieces of unleavened bread which had served both for plates and dishes, and all that remained upon them, were taken possession of by my two Persian servants, whose right hands never ceased their labours till every scrap had disappeared.

The previous night having been passed in the saddle, I retired to rest rather earlier than usual. My bed was spread upon the ground, and from the spot where I lay I could see the broken indented line of the wall that formed the farther parapet of the bastion, clearly and sharply defined against the starlit sky. Before I fell asleep I observed that the line of wall—and exactly that portion of it which crossed my window—resembled the profile of an upturned face, and curiously enough, though on a somewhat gigantic scale, of a face remarkably regular and Grecian in its outline. And thus, having discovered the fancied resemblance to a human countenance that the top of the old ruined wall presented when thrown into black relief by the shades of night, I became so fascinated with the discovery, that long before I had fallen asleep I gazed and gazed through the darkness till the features engraved themselves upon my memory like those of some familiar, well-known, and well-remembered face. As I wandered away to the land of dreams, the clanging boom of kettledrums and the shrill notes of some instrument that sounded like those of a fife arose from some of the courtyards below, and then indistinctly I heard the martial sounds caught up by the night breeze and swept-away to be the sport of distant mountain echoes.

How long I had slept I knew not, but about midnight, as I reckoned, I was awoke by the creaking of the one wooden shutter that half closed the aperture of that window of my room which looked out upon the terrace. The light wind eddying round the bastion caught the projecting shutter, and set it creaking on its osier hinges with such a grating doleful noise that once I had heard it I felt that sleep, tired though I was, was out of the question till I had fastened the offending object in such a way that it would be impossible for it to offend any longer. I therefore at once rose for the purpose of securing it, but before doing so, I looked out upon the night. A waning moon that was just rising

* A well-stained soiled tablecloth is considered a token of the liberality and good cheer of the host.

threw little or no light upon the scene around me. But the stars, set in the deep blue enamel of the heaven, were everywhere in their most brilliant array. Looking immediately about me, the massive walls of the fortress appeared dark, solid, and sombre against the midnight sky. From my two servants, who lay stretched like corpses flat upon the terrace, immediately outside the door of my room, my gaze wandered to the old ruined wall that bounded the *terre-plein* of the bastion. Then, as a matter of course, as I bethought me of the outline of the face that had so fascinated me as I fell asleep, I commenced to look for the, to me, well-known features so fancifully formed by the accidents of ruin and decay. But, strange to relate, I could see nowhere that for which I looked. No profile of a face, or anything resembling it, was visible. Do what I would, my eyes seemed spontaneously ever to come back and rest upon a certain projection or rise which looked so black, still, and dark, that it appeared as if of a piece with the wall itself. But in a few minutes, by dint of anxious and attentive observation, I satisfied myself that this projection was the object that marred the fancied beauty of the profile that I had gazed upon as I fell asleep. For, separating it in my mind's eye from the wall, the features, such as I remembered them, became at once distinct and traceable as they had been before. This projection then was something new, a something on the wall or of the wall that had not existed during the early hours of the night. Of this I had not the least doubt. For when I recalled to mind and traced the features such as I had seen them the night before, I, as I have said before, recognised them again, only just where the short upper lip of the profile had dipped into a graceful curve, there now uprose something — what, it was impossible to discern, — but something that looked as if of one piece with the wall, so black and motionless did it appear against the sky. Looking at it again and again, it seemed to me to assume the shape and dimensions of a hooded human figure. Once this impression had taken possession of me, it made me feel intensely uncomfortable, for I could not divest myself of the idea that from the seemingly immovable object above a pair of human eyes was fixed intent upon my movements. This supposed presence of a silent midnight watcher within a stone's throw of my couch so troubled and perturbed me, that I was determined I would satisfy myself whether or not I was right

in my conjecture. I therefore placed myself against the side of the window, so as to bring a star to touch the outline of the object. For I reasoned that if this thing above was "a thing of life," a movement of some kind or other would sooner or later betoken that, immovable and lifeless as it appeared, it was not a mere projection of the crumbling battlements of the wall, as it at the first glance seemed to be. In the position I had placed myself I knew that its slightest motion would become immediately apparent to the eye. How long I watched I know not, but second succeeded second, minute followed minute, and still so perfectly motionless and quiet did the dark object above remain that I began to think my sight had played me some trick, and that the fancied profile was merely the baseless fabric of some waking dream. Then again it was hard to make myself believe this, for the remainder of the features I could distinctly trace. As a last resource I bethought me that, standing up as I then was, my eyes being upon a different level, I saw that which had been invisible to me when lying down. But, by stooping, I brought my eyes to the same plane as that along which I looked when on my bed. In this position the human proportions of the object became, or seemed to become, more than ever apparent. As I felt that lying down to sleep was impossible while this strange thing was brooding above between me and the starlight, I stepped out of the window, and, dropping into the terrace, I walked slowly across and straight up to the opposite wall, gazing intently through the gloom upon that which had so aroused my curiosity. When about half-way across, as if by magic the object disappeared. I fancied I heard the sounds of a quickly-retreating hurried step, and then all was silent and still again. I listened in vain for several minutes to catch some sound that might betray the further movements of this strange night-visitor. I heard nought save the hoot of an owl, whose sudden and piercing shriek, "making night hideous," sounded like the cry of some suffering wretch doomed to everlasting torture and perdition. As the top of the wall in its lowest places was some fifteen or eighteen feet high, I knew that any attempt to scale it from my side was out of the question. So I abandoned the idea of making an effort to scramble up — an idea I had momentarily entertained — for the purpose of seeing what standing-room, if any, existed on the other side, and so near the top of the wall that a person standing

upon it would show the upper portion of the figure in the way that this strange and silent visitor had done. I therefore returned to my chamber and threw myself upon my couch, and though sleep came not for some time, I neither saw nor heard anything more to disturb me that night.

The next morning at the appointed hour I waited upon the Chief of the Fort of F_____. Though Firamoorz had not told me anything about his father, save that he was very aged and infirm, I no sooner saw him than I felt convinced that I was in the presence of one who had not many days to live. Propped up against the wall by large bundles of felt and silk-covered pillows, there sat, or rather reclined, a man upon whose worn and wasted features death was visibly and unmistakably stamped. Looking at those features, and at the dim lack-lustre eyes that gazed vacantly into space, I could trace the resemblance that Firamoorz, who was present during the visit, bore to his father. The interview was to me a most painful one, for the aged Chief, racked as he appeared every now and then to be by the pains of death, was scarcely conscious of anything that was passing around him. Those attending upon the Chief asked me whether I had any medicines that would alleviate in any way the sufferings that were so evident and so distressing to witness. I knew that the few simple drugs I carried were powerless to cope with the ravages of the terrible disease which was rapidly taking the old Chief to his grave; so I was careful not to give any, and therewith raise false hopes.

It was during the still and quiet hour of noon, when I thought there would be the least probability of my being disturbed in my explorations, that I had proposed to myself to enter the old ruined building that was opposite. I concluded that from its windows — the building evidently had two floors — I should be able to look into the courtyard, or whatever it was, that lay beyond the lofty and apparently fragile wall that bounded my terrace, for I was anxious to see what standing room the mysterious visitor of the night had found so near the top of it. Scrambling up some old stone steps, which, though much worn, had evidently not been used for years, for cobwebs hung stretched above them, and the dust of ages that had accumulated everywhere rose at my every tread in little clouds of vapour, I found myself in the entrance of a large room from the windows of which I could look down into my courtyard and the one that was now visible adjacent to it. Great was my surprise

to observe that, the level of the yards being the same, the wall was as lofty on this side as on my own. So that the person, or whatever it was, must have been standing some fifteen or sixteen feet above the level of the ground below. My next care was to see how this was practicable. I discovered that within three or four feet of the top of the crumbling wall there were the remains on this side of an ancient ramp that still afforded standing room, though from its ruined state the space was both narrow and confined. The only thing that struck me was, that this ramp, with no steps that I could discover leading up to it, must have been of difficult access to anybody ascending to it from the yard below. As I stood pondering within myself as to the intentions of the strange night-visitor that had evidently wished to escape my observation the night before, the solemn stillness that reigned amid these old ruined walls and rooms at this the noon tide hour was suddenly broken by the noise of a fast approaching step. Curious to know who it was, I stood concealed behind the massive buttress of the window. What was my astonishment when the old Oozeer, entering from some door below me, strode into the yard. I watched him as he carefully examined the dividing wall with the ruined ramp, and then, as if apparently satisfied with his examination, he turned on his heel and left the yard by the same entrance as that by which he had approached. From the sound of his retreating step it was evident that he was leaving the building we were then in, in a direction opposite to that in which my abode lay. This reconnoitring as it were, of the ground in my immediate neighbourhood by the old Oozeer at once set me a-thinking. Had this sinister-looking old man, whose appearance I had from the commencement disliked, any evil design against my life? When suddenly I had conceived this idea, my thoughts ran riot along the ways of murder and assassination. For a few moments, as I betook me of the remaining window of my room that hung high over the moat below, it struck me that if attacked at disadvantage in that room escape would be impossible. But as suddenly as I conceived, so suddenly did I abandon the idea. For when I came to my sober senses I felt convinced that as long as I remained a guest of the Chief in whose fort I was then in, no one would dare to raise a finger against me. Then again, for a person to approach my room from the terrace wall could not be done, at least so far as I was aware, without their making a sheer drop of some

fifteen or eighteen feet, and this was no likely manner for an assassin to approach when the much easier way by the door into the yard outside my room presented itself; for this door, though always closed at night from the inside in accordance with the wishes of Firamoorz, given to me by himself, could only be made fast in a manner so temporary and insecure that any one wishing to enter could have opened it from the outside with but little noise or trouble. The supposition that any would-be assassin would fire into the window of my room on the chance of hitting me, I also dismissed from my mind, knowing that an Afgaun would rather trust to his knife to despatch his victim than to such an uncertainty as that presented by firing into the window of a dark room.

That my life was not the object seemed finally to me so conclusive from manifest reasons, that I felt not the slightest doubt on the subject. So I utterly banished from my mind the "thick-coming fancies" that for a few moments had oppressed me. As far as I could judge, it remained alone evident to me that in some way or other the visit of the old Oozeer which I had just witnessed, was connected with the mysterious apparition of the night previous. In what way it was so connected, I could not form the most slender surmise. What his object might have been in having come either in person, or in having sent some one to the top of the wall to watch me in the middle of the night, was more than I could divine. Thinking over the matter, I made the best of my way back, and then, what with coquetting with the calm-restoring "kaileeoon," and sipping some delicious sherbet cooled with lumps of snow that had been sent me by Firamoorz, the hours passed peacefully and quietly away, till the sun, dipping towards distant rocky peaks, warned me that the time for the evening visit of the young Chief had approached. Shortly after the "zaaun," or call to evening prayers, had sounded from the minarets of a small mosque below, the young Chief made his appearance at my door. He was in rather more than his usual buoyant spirits. He told me that he had been for the greater part of the day in pursuit of one of his father's clansmen, who, having refused to pay his annual tribute of goats and sheep, had disappeared with his flocks from the pastures rented by him. Firamoorz had this day caught him, but the capture had not been effected without a struggle, for Firamoorz told me with delight the manner in which, after the fight had lasted some time, he managed to plant his spear

in the back of the absconder, and so, bringing him to the ground, had put an end to the conflict. It appeared then that the poor wretch had been tied to the saddlebow of one of the victorious party, and so brought captive to the fort.

The young Chief had kept the ball of conversation rolling so rapidly and noisily that I had no opportunity of making my voice heard, even if I had wished to do so. At first I had thought of mentioning to Firamoorz the strange occurrence of the past night; but as the door of the room remained open, and some of his attendants were seated immediately outside listening to the conversation, and every now and then loudly expressing their approbation of their young master's prowess, it struck me that I could scarcely touch upon the subject without giving rise to suspicions that I was a prey to alarms for my own safety — suspicions which, remembering the hospitable treatment I had received, I was most anxious not to excite.

When darkness had set in, and my bed had been spread in the same place that it had occupied the night before, I looked out from it into the gloom, and there saw, crossing the open half of the window, the profile that had so fascinated me when I had first discovered it. In daylight it was not distinguishable, but now that the ruined wall was in deep black shadow, it became distinctly traceable between me and the starlit sky. As I scanned the features so curiously and delicately carved by the caprice of time and decay, I wondered within myself whether they would be again distorted by the same mysterious apparition that had so suddenly marred their to me fancied beauty during the past night. They were not so marred, nor was I destined again to see anything above them; but I have to record the occurrence of an event in the dead of the night of a nature to me at the time so strange and unaccountable, that it far surpassed what I had already witnessed. I never could remember exactly what it was that awoke me — whether it was some unwonted noise, or whether it was mere accident, that caused me suddenly to open my eyes, and fix them staring, and, as it were, wide awake upon that corner of my room which was immediately in front of me, and between the two windows. Through the open window, for there was no sort of shutter to it, that overhung the moat, there came a faint gleam of moonlight that fell aslant upon the floor, and threw an uncertain light across and in front of that corner, upon the utter darkness of

which my gaze was intently and involuntarily fastened. In that corner I could see nothing, nor could I hear anything. The deep stillness, and silence, and darkness of night was on all things; yet some sense, some instinct, warned me that the dark recess into which I was gazing was tenanted. A feeling that I was not alone in the room, a nervous dread of the presence of some unseen, unrealised thing, took such powerful hold of me, that for a few seconds I felt I was powerless to exert any will of my own, or even to move the fixed gaze of my eyes from off the dark corner in front of them. At length, by a strong effort of the will, I roused myself into something that partook of a reasoning mood. I asked myself why, not having seen anything, or indeed heard anything, should this foolish idea have taken possession of me, that the room had another occupant besides myself? Why should I allow myself to entertain a vague horror of that which, at the most, had but a fancied existence in my excited imagination? And now that my sobered senses had partially resumed their sway, I felt almost inclined to laugh aloud at my folly, as I finally lowered my gaze, and allowed it to follow the faint light of the moonbeam that fell aslant upon the floor. But this inclination to laugh at what I had almost succeeded in making myself believe was my own folly, was of the shortest possible duration, as the reader may suppose; for no sooner had I looked on the floor than the light that faintly streamed through the window was suddenly broken by a shadow that seemed to fall upon it, as if something had been projected into the moon's ray from out of the black depth of the recess. Then after all I was right! The room *had* another occupant besides myself! Of this there could be no longer any doubt, for this shadow so suddenly thrown and now visible before me was no mere fanciful creation of the brain. On looking up, something — what, I had not time to discern — gleamed for an instant in the light, and then withdrew into the darkness. It is impossible for me to record with distinctness what guided my subsequent actions. I suppose it was the prompting of some desire of self-defence that caused me to spring from my bed and make my way across the room to the spot where my sabre hung suspended from the wall. To reach this down was the work of an instant, but I had to turn my back upon the window. As my fingers grasped the handle, something seemed to pass swiftly across the uncertain light of

the moon, and the wooden casement of the window gave out a sound as if it had received a rude shock. I stood rooted to the ground like one bereft of his senses, and in a manner bewildered, not knowing what to do or what to think. My brow felt chill and damp. And I was conscious of a feeling as if a piece of ice had been passed rapidly down my back, as the thought seized me that I had been in the presence of some supernatural being, for I conceived that nothing human could make an exit from that window hanging high over the moat below and live. Was this some ghost, some spirit that had thus flitted away from my mortal presence, prognosticating by its visit the approaching death of the old Chief which it had been evident to me was nigh at hand?

As I asked myself this question I believe I almost smiled at my own credulity, for I remembered the shadow that the thing had thrown upon the floor. And ghosts, I reflected, at least real *bona fide* orthodox ghosts, should, like Peter Schlehmil, not be possessed of a shadow. Then I betheught me of the mysterious apparition of the night previous. That "ghost, if ghost it were," was possessed in like manner of too solid, opaque, and material a substance to admit for a moment of the belief that it partook of a solely spiritual nature. As I tried to comfort myself with these assurances, there still remained a lurking hard-to-be-denied suspicion in me that these old ruined and long tenantless rooms might be haunted, and that my occupation of them had disturbed the accustomed nightly visit of some ghostly thing or other. I tried to make my way to the window, but my step faltered and my limbs trembled beneath me. Even the sudden gleam of the moon, reflecting itself from the polished surface of the sabre, as I finally reached the window, made me start back as if I had trodden on an adder. I peered out into the night and listened for some sound that might help me in divining what strange thing it was that had just effected its exit from the window. As I looked down into the gloomy depths below the screech of the night-owl — the same screech I thought that I had heard before — suddenly broke the stillness of the night. So strangely discordant and piercing were the tones of this shrieking bird that they seemed to rend and tear into shreds the still hush of the midnight hour. The very life-blood in my veins was chilled by the weird unearthly sounds, and I felt that peculiar creeping sensation which, acting through the nerves upon the skin, causes the feeling which the Italians I

think designate by the name of " pelle d'anatro." So perturbed and puzzled were my thoughts that not till the cheerful " light of jocund day stood tiptoe on the rosy mountain-tops," did sleep come to me. Then I fell off into a troubled and dream-oppressed slumber, in which my brain was tortured with shapes not of this earth, which flitted like bats to and fro through the open window of my apartment.

The third and last day of my stay was occupied for the greater part in making preparations for my departure, which had been fixed for the morrow. With the exception of the usual evening visit of Firamoorz, the day passed without any occurrence worthy of remark. As on former occasions, the young Chief came accompanied by the old Oozeer and a train of armed followers. He talked volubly, as was his wont, seldom or never pausing in his speech for either question or reply from me. He wore a handsomely-mounted Khorassanee scimitar, which in the course of conversation he drew from its scabbard for the purpose of showing me the blade. The metal of which this was made, displaying one of the most esteemed patterns of damascene, was evidently of fine temper. Carefully examining it, I found it possessed in the highest degree the three great excellences of the true Khorassan blade. Firstly, the hue of the ground, being of a grey colour — it may also be of a brown and of a black colour, and yet denote good steel — was decided and deep in its tint: secondly, the play of colour on the metal, when subjected to oblique light, was very beautiful. The tints most perceptible then were crimson and yellow, patches of the former colour touched at their edge with a golden hue, like red clouds bathed in the light of a setting sun. Thirdly, the figures or patterns — the damascene — were those most highly esteemed and admired by Orientals. Like written characters they spread themselves across the whole breadth of the blade, the lines in some places fantastically curling till they ended in a point; in others, undulating in diverse directions, they crossed and intersected each other, forming elaborate network on the blade. Firamoorz said that no weapon that he had ever seen could be compared to it in firmness and keenness of edge. The sword had been, he told me, for many generations an heirloom in the family, and he recounted with evident pride the doughty deeds of his ancestors when wielding the costly and well-tempered weapon.

That evening, the last of my visit, I remained sleepless for many hours after throw-

ing myself upon my bed. My mind was occupied in revolving the strange occurrences of the two past nights. The more I reflected the more puzzled and mystified did I become. With the spectral apparition — for I had almost begun to look upon it as such — I could in no way connect the bodily presence of the old Oozeer. For it was his visit to the ruined building adjacent, of which I had been a silent witness, that had made me suspect he was in some way or other connected with the silent midnight watcher that had attracted my attention during the first night. But on the occurrence of the following night I could form no sort of conjecture whatever. It was preposterous to suppose that a man well stricken in years, as he was, could have attempted, much less succeeded, in making an exit from the window situated as mine was. And that the Thing, whatever it was, had made its egress from that window I felt convinced. Besides, what object could he have had in visiting thus stealthily, and by night, the chamber occupied by me? The idea that he had come for the purpose and with the design of taking anything from me by stealth, I could not for a moment entertain. For, in the first place, there was nothing that I had that he would be likely to covet; and in the second, such conduct on his part would have been a breach of those laws of hospitality which an Afghaun, in his position, would be the last to hold in high esteem. Looking at the matter in every light that occurred to me, I was utterly unable to arrive at any satisfactory solution of that, which was in so bewildering a degree puzzling and mystifying me. And thinking over, in its minutest details, all that I had seen, I began, as the silent hours of night went by, to entertain a sort of dread presentiment that I was destined again to witness something on this the last night of my stay that would startle and appal me. Such a fixed idea in my brain did this become that it finally brought a sort of fascination with it — a feeling of dread expectancy that quite banished all desire and inclination for sleep. I was now determined that I would keep awake throughout the night, in order that if by chance anything should approach I would, being on the alert, in all probability be able to form some sort of conjecture as to its nature and design. Restless and disturbed in consequence of the feeling that had gradually come over me, I could remain no longer in my bed. I therefore arose and seated myself in observation behind the window that looked into the terrace. Though in this position I was entirely

concealed from the view of any one approaching by the terrace, I could see into it as far as the darkness of the night permitted. And I could also see the window which, if my visitor of the night previous did not partake of a supernatural or ghostly character, must, I concluded, have means of access to it of which I was entirely ignorant.

From the position of the constellation of Orion I judged that it was close upon midnight when I took my seat by the window. The moon had not yet risen, so that the terrace beneath was in pitchy darkness, save in one spot. Here the remains of a fire which the servants had built up with sticks and straw under the wall still glowed and flickered as every now and then a breath of the night wind blew it into life. I had not been in my post of observation long when a large rat scampered up to within the space lighted by the embers. He approached them cautiously, and when apparently satisfied, after solemn scrutiny, that there was no immediate danger to be apprehended, he commenced to eat voraciously the crumbs and relics that remained on the ground from the evening meal. These disposed of, he concentrated an attack of teeth and claws upon a half-burnt candle that had been left by the servants. I was watching his every movement with intense interest when the surrounding stillness was scattered by a sudden noise. It seemed to come from the other side of the wall of the terrace, and was as that of a person on the move, but of one who rather ran than walked, for it was no measured tread, in that the footfall was not distinguishable. The sounds ceased, and then all was again still. It was no mere fancy my having heard the sounds, for I observed that the rat suddenly ceased his nibbling and stared at the wall, as if he expected that it was about to open and something emerge from it. The sounds from the farther side ceasing, my friend the rat commenced at the candle again, as if assured by the silence which had ensued that there was no immediate danger to be apprehended. But the silence was not of long duration, for after only a few minutes it was broken by the noise as if of some heavy body dropping into the terrace, and upon my side of the wall. Of this, from the sound, there was not the least doubt. Then followed the noise of the shuffling quick movements that I had heard before. That something was approaching was evident. For the rat jerked his head in the direction of the noise, sharply whisked his tail in the other, and then incontinently vanished. I peered into the darkness, endeavouring in vain to dis-

cern what it was that was moving on the terrace. But nothing was visible for a few seconds. Then, as the sounds approached the fire, I saw gliding forth from the gloom into the light a tall, draped, and phantom-shaped thing. It resembled in such startling manner that which had almost pictured itself in my imagination as the thing that I was destined to see, that I felt appalled and horror-struck, thinking that the figure was nothing more or less than a "sheeted ghost." I thought I would hail it, but my tongue clave to my mouth, and I felt utterly unable to speak or move. As it approached the embers a tongue of flame leapt upwards from the outlying fragments of stick and straw, and, flickering for a moment in the night breeze, threw a sudden gleam around. Noticing this, it was with a shuddering recollection I remembered the lone creature from the wood, in Coleridge's 'Christabel,' at whose weird presence the dying embers in the old ancestral hall burst into flame, and the dogs howled as in abject dread. An indescribable horror of the mysterious apparition that was now within a few feet of where I was concealed, crept over me. Yet, feeling this horror with the greatest intensity, I had no inclination to take my eye away from the dreaded object, for now its every movement had a strange fascination for me. What was my astonishment to see it, as it approached the fire, stoop down and put forth a long, lean, nervous hand to clutch the candle! This was held over the embers, and then above them, and, lighted by their glow, I saw what looked to me like the pale distended cheeks of a human face — distended with the act of blowing. The candle suddenly flared into flame, and I then saw — but, gracious heavens! how shall my poor pen convey an idea of the strange being that was now seating itself by the fire? The face, illuminated by the fitful glare of the candle, was evidently that of a woman, but the features were so sharply defined, there were such strange hard lines about the mouth and brow, that there was nothing soft or womanly in its expression. And then there was a look in the eyes which was terrible — large, prominent, and reflecting the glow of the embers, they seemed to be lit by the fire that you see in those of a wild animal. They rolled incessantly in their sockets, except when every now and then the strange creature, apparently listening attentively, turned them with a fixed stare full upon the window behind which I was ensconced, as if she were trying to pierce the gloom of the chamber. Then, as the brows contracted and as the white of the eyes grew

painfully visible, there was something dreadful in her aspect. It was a frenzied concentration of baffled hate, revenge, and despair; and as I looked upon the ghastly pallor of the face, relieved by the black mass of dishevelled hair falling on one shoulder, it seemed as if a portrait as terrible as that of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Medusa,' had framed itself in the immeasurable gloom of night in front of me. As she seated herself by the fire, the loose white drapery which had enveloped her person had fallen not ungracefully around her. Her arms, stretched out towards the heat of the embers, were long and sinewy, and the muscles resembled, in their hard wiry look, more those of one of the species of the large quadrupeds than those of a human being. Looking at them and her lithe quick movement, it was evident that she was possessed of amazing agility and physical strength. My eye took in these details patiently enough when once, after the first momentary glance, I had assured myself that this nightly visitor of mine was a human being, and not some phantom from another world. But her strange — and at times incoherent — gestures, and the wild, restless look in her eyes, had convinced me that she was a maniac. The melancholy state of the poor creature's mind was only too clearly and too painfully manifest. As from her attentive listening, with head bent in the direction of my room, I was sure that she did not wish to attract my attention or be seen by me, I remained perfectly still. She had remained some minutes seated, when the candle, which she had fixed cleverly enough on end upon the terrace, seemed to rivet her attention. She was evidently pleased at the light that it gave, for a satisfied look passed across her features as she watched the flame bend hither and thither in the night wind. Suddenly she rose and sped swiftly away to the door that led into the terrace. I at first fancied that she was gone, for I heard her undo the fastenings of the door on the inside. But this was no sooner done than she made good her way to the spot where my baggage had been placed. She turned over several of the articles, and then came back to the fire with swift stealthy tread. I observed that she had brought with her three candles — the last in my possession — and lighting these, she appeared to have filled the measure of her contentment. A low satisfied laugh came from her half-closed lips, the evil expression of her features vanished, and there came upon them a gleam of forlorn beauty. Now that I could see her well, and in this mood, her likeness to

Firamoorz struck me forcibly — the same handsome cast of features, and the same bold fearless look that his features bore at all times. She amused herself in childishly lighting and relighting the candles, and then, secreting them one and all about her person, she rose as suddenly as she had done before. She stayed a second or two listening attentively whether anything was moving in my chamber, and then, apparently satisfied, she flitted away in the direction of the door at the foot of the old ruined building. As I listened to her receding steps, as she strode through the deserted, ruined passages, I heard the piercing shrieking wail which I now knew only too well. I now knew it to be her voice, the voice of this poor night-wandering maniac, and not the cry of the owl that thus rent the still midnight air.

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It was while riding down the gorge with Firamoorz — for he only, attended by a few of his retainers, had accompanied me — that I determined to broach the subject that was on my mind. I felt extremely unwilling to go away without making an effort to learn something of the history of the strange being whose nightly visits had so perplexed me. But feeling sure, from her likeness to Firamoorz, that she was some near relation of his own, I knew, he being an Afghaun, that in making any direct inquiry about her I should be treading on delicate ground. So having pondered in my own mind that it would be desirable to await a favourable opportunity before I mentioned to him what I had been a witness of, or asked him any questions with reference to it, I talked to him on various subjects. As it turned out, an opportunity happened sooner than I had expected; for, in the course of conversation, he, in his usual brusque way, asked me how I had slept during the three nights that I had been his father's guest. I related to him how I had been disturbed, and also what I had seen. I observed that in the course of my relation of the matter he was anxious, before answering any of my queries, to inform himself of all that I had been a witness of. Once informed by me to the full extent on this, he seemed to wish to have nothing further to conceal from me, and answered all my questions in his usual frank manner. Indeed he did more, for he recounted to me the history of the poor creature whose wanderings by night had caused her to be seen by me. She was his only sister, but older than himself by several years. Her first

husband, a cousin and her playmate in childhood, and to whom she was fondly attached, had been killed while yet a youth, and only a few months after their betrothal, in a foray with a rebellious tribe on the frontiers of Persia. She was then given in marriage by her father to the Oozeer. It was shortly subsequent to this marriage that her reason became impaired. And though Firamoorz did not assign any cause for this, I inferred from the few words that he said on this particular part of her history that it had been owing, in a great measure, to the Oozeer's cruel treatment of her. His extreme jealousy, and his cruel, savage disposition, which I had observed stamped with an unmistakable expression upon his features, had induced him to adopt measures for her confinement and seclusion more stringent than those allowed and sanctioned by Mohammedan law even to the lord of the harem. She was maintained in so strict a solitude by him, that not even one of her own sex was ever allowed to approach her. But as time grew on, her reason began to fail her. And then she would brook no confinement or imprisonment at his hands. She had made her escape from every place that the ingenuity of the Oozeer had provided for her seclusion. At last, but reluctantly, he gave it up in despair as a hopeless task. For the last few years she had been allowed perfect liberty of action; but having once exerted the whole force of her shaken reason in devising means of escape, and having invariably succeeded, her pleasure and custom now was to scale the lofty walls of the keep, and to make her way over its ruined and crumbling battlements, by paths where no human foot dared follow her. She was never to be seen by daylight; but after dusk she was always on the move, and her wild shrieking wail would be wafted through the still air of night from the dizzy heights of the keep, deemed inaccessible by the sirbauz on guard, who listened in awe to her piercing cries. They had invested her with supernatural powers, and never dared look at her if she passed near their beat. The old Oozeer, fearing that I should either hear or see her if I came to the Fort, had, Firamoorz told me, wished to prevent my paying a visit to the Chief his father. But when he found that he could not prevent my visit, on account of several reasons connected with my appointed duties there, he had been careful to have me placed in a part of the citadel which he fancied, from its position, to be inaccessible even to her. And it was on this account that he had desired Firamoorz

to enjoin my keeping shut the door of the terrace, so as to leave her no access, as he supposed, to the rooms occupied by me and my servants.

When I expressed my astonishment that she should have so persistently visited my abode every night, Firamoorz explained that her only object, as he supposed, must have been to possess herself of the candles. She must have observed one of these burning the first night of my stay, and never having seen one before, her desire had been to take one away for her own amusement without being seen by anybody. The first two nights my being on the alert, as she was cautiously making her way to the terrace, had driven her forth, only to return the third night, when she imagined she was not being watched by me. He was much astonished when I related her sudden escape through the window over the moat. He was aware, he said, that a ledge ran round the bastion beneath the window, which widened as it approached the main wall of the keep; but neither he nor the old Oozeer had ever deemed it possible that she would attempt to make her way along it. That she must have done so had been only too evident to me; and he could only assume that the way was familiar to her, and that from long use she had been able to take advantage of the inequalities in the ruined face of the bastion as she made her perilous way around it.

By the time that Firamoorz had satisfied my curiosity on all points connected with the strange and eventful history that he had, apparently without reserve, recounted to me, we had left the gorge, and had advanced some distance into the plain below. Here he took leave of me, and wishing that God would ever be my protector, he clapped spurs to his horse, and dashed away across the plain, followed by his retainers. I jogged on my way, seeing ever before me the ghastly face and the wild eyes of the night-wanderer that haunted me for many a day like a terrible and fearful vision.

Prof. Palmieri, of Naples, who is making a rigid scientific investigation into the phenomena accompanying the eruption of Vesuvius, states that he has never seen the magnetic needle so frequently and so seriously disturbed as it is at present, and that the seismograph records at least ten distinct earthquake shocks daily.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NEWS ABOUT MR. MILDMAY AND SIR EVERARD.

FITZGIBBON and Phineas started together from Pall Mall for Portman Square, — as both of them had promised to call on Lady Laura, — but Fitzgibbon turned in at Brooks's as they walked up St. James's Square, and Phineas went on by himself in a cab. "You should belong here," said Fitzgibbon as his friend entered the cab, and Phineas immediately began to feel that he would have done nothing till he could get into Brooks's. It might be very well to begin by talking politics at the Reform Club. Such talking had procured for him his seat at Loughshane. But that was done now, and something more than talking was wanted for any further progress. Nothing, as he told himself, of political import was managed at the Reform Club. No influence from thence was ever brought to bear upon the adjustment of places under the Government, or upon the arrangement of cabinets. It might be very well to count votes at the Reform Club; but after the votes had been counted, — had been counted successfully, — Brooks's was the place, as Phineas believed, to learn at the earliest moment what would be the exact result of the success. He must get into Brooks's, if it might be possible for him. Fitzgibbon was not exactly the man to propose him. Perhaps the Earl of Brentford would do it.

Lady Laura was at home, and with her was sitting — Mr. Kennedy. Phineas had intended to be triumphant as he entered Lady Laura's room. He was there with the express purpose of triumphing in the success of their great party, and of singing a pleasant paean in conjunction with Lady Laura. But his trumpet was put out of tune at once when he saw Mr. Kennedy. He said hardly a word as he gave his hand to Lady Laura, — and then afterwards to Mr. Kennedy, who chose to greet him with this show of cordiality.

"I hope you are satisfied, Mr. Finn," said Lady Laura, laughing.

"Oh yes."

"And is that all? I thought to have found your joy quite irrepressible."

"A bottle of soda-water, though it is a very lively thing when opened, won't maintain its vivacity beyond a certain period, Lady Laura."

"And you have had your gas let off already?"

"Well, — yes; at any rate, the sputter-

ing part of it. Nineteen is very well, but the question is whether we might not have had twenty-one."

"Mr. Kennedy has just been saying that not a single available vote has been missed on our side. He has just come from Brooks's, and that seems to be what they say there."

So Mr. Kennedy also was a member of Brooks's! At the Reform Club there certainly had been an idea that the number might have been swelled to twenty-one; but then, as Phineas began to understand, nothing was correctly known at the Reform Club. For an accurate appreciation of the political balances of the day, you must go to Brooks's.

"Mr. Kennedy must of course be right," said Phineas. "I don't belong to Brooks's myself. But I was only joking, Lady Laura. There is, I suppose, no doubt that Lord De Terrier is out, and that is everything."

"He has probably tendered his resignation," said Mr. Kennedy.

"That is the same thing," said Phineas, roughly.

"Not exactly," said Lady Laura. "Should there be any difficulty about Mr. Mildmay, he might, at the Queen's request, make another attempt."

"With a majority of nineteen against him!" said Phineas. "Surely Mr. Mildmay is not the only man in the country. There is the Duke, and there is Mr. Gresham, — and there is Mr. Monk." Phineas had at his tongue's end all the lesson that he had been able to learn at the Reform Club.

"I should hardly think the Duke would venture," said Mr. Kennedy.

"Nothing venture, nothing have," said Phineas. "It is all very well to say that the Duke is incompetent, but I do not know that anything very wonderful is required in the way of genius. The Duke has held his own in both Houses successfully, and he is both honest and popular. I quite agree that a Prime Minister at the present day should be commonly honest, and more than commonly popular."

"So you are all for the Duke, are you?" said Lady Laura, again smiling as she spoke to him.

"Certainly; — if we are deserted by Mr. Mildmay. Don't you think so?"

"I don't find it quite so easy to make up my mind as you do. I am inclined to think that Mr. Mildmay will form a government; and as long as there is that prospect, I need hardly commit myself to an opinion as to

his probable successor." Then the objectionable Mr. Kennedy took his leave, and Phineas was left alone with Lady Laura.

"It is glorious;—is it not?" he began, as soon as he found the field to be open for himself and his own manœuvring. But he was very young, and had not as yet learned the manner in which he might best advance his cause with such a woman as Lady Laura Standish. He was telling her too clearly that he could have no gratification in talking with her unless he could be allowed to have her all to himself. That might be very well if Lady Laura were in love with him, but would hardly be the way to reduce her to that condition.

"Mr. Finn," said she, smiling as she spoke, "I am sure that you did not mean it, but you were uncourteous to my friend Mr. Kennedy."

"Who? I? Was I? Upon my word, I didn't intend to be uncourteous."

"If I had thought you had intended it, of course I could not tell you of it. And now I take the liberty;—for it is a liberty"—

"Oh no."

"Because I feel so anxious that you should do nothing to mar your chances as a rising man."

"You are only too kind to me,—always."

"I know how clever you are, and how excellent are all your instincts; but I see that you are a little impetuous. I wonder whether you will be angry if I take upon myself the task of mentor."

"Nothing you could say would make me angry,—though you might make me very unhappy."

"I will not do that if I can help it. A mentor ought to be very old, you know, and I am infinitely older than you are."

"I should have thought it was the reverse;—indeed, I may say that I know that it is," said Phineas.

"I am not talking of years. Years have very little to do with the comparative ages of men and women. A woman at forty is quite old, whereas a man at forty is young."

Phineas, remembering that he had put down Mr. Kennedy's age as forty in his own mind, frowned when he heard this, and walked about the room in displeasure. "And therefore," continued Lady Laura, "I talk to you as though I were a kind of grandmother."

"You shall be my great-grandmother if you will only be kind enough to me to say what you really think."

"You must not then be so impetuous,

and you must be a little more careful to be civil to persons to whom you may not take any particular fancy. Now Mr. Kennedy is a man who may be very useful to you."

"I do not want Mr. Kennedy to be of use to me."

"That is what I call being impetuous,—being young,—being a boy. Why should not Mr. Kennedy be of use to you as well as any one else. You do not mean to conquer the world all by yourself."

"No;—but there is something mean to me in the expressed idea that I should make use of any man,—and more especially of a man whom I don't like."

"And why do you not like him, Mr. Finn?"

"Because he is one of my Dr. Fells."

"You don't like him simply because he does not talk much. That may be a good reason why you should not make of him an intimate companion,—because you like talkative people; but it should be no ground for dislike."

Phineas paused for a moment before he answered her, thinking whether or not it would be well to ask her some question which might produce from her a truth which he would not like to hear. Then he did ask it. "And do you like him?" he said.

She too paused, but only for a second. "Yes,—I think I may say that I do like him."

"No more than that?"

"Certainly no more than that;—but that I think is a great deal."

"I wonder what you would say if any one asked you whether you liked me," said Phineas, looking away from her through the window.

"Just the same;—but without the doubt, if the person who questioned me had any right to ask the question. There are not above one or two who could have such a right."

"And I was wrong, of course, to ask it about Mr. Kennedy," said Phineas, looking out into the Square.

"I did not say so."

"But I see you think it."

"You see nothing of the kind. I was quite willing to be asked the question by you, and quite willing to answer it. Mr. Kennedy is a man of great wealth."

"What can that have to do with it?"

"Wait a moment, you impetuous Irish boy, and hear me out." Phineas liked being called an impetuous Irish boy, and came close to her, sitting where he could look up into her face; and then came a smile upon

his own, and he was very handsome. "I say that he is a man of great wealth," continued Lady Laura; "and as wealth gives influence, he is of great use, — politically, — to the party to which he belongs."

"Oh, politically!"

"Am I to suppose you care nothing for politics? To such men, to men who think as you think, who are to sit on the same benches with yourself, and go into the same lobby, and be seen at the same club, it is your duty to be civil both for your own sake and for that of the cause. It is for the hermits of society to indulge in personal dislikes, — for men who have never been active and never mean to be active. I had been telling Mr. Kennedy how much I thought of you, — as a good Liberal."

"And I came in and spoilt it all."

"Yes, you did. You knocked down my little house, and I must build it all up again."

"Don't trouble yourself, Lady Laura."

"I shall. It will be a great deal of trouble, — a great deal, indeed; but I shall take it. I mean you to be very intimate with Mr. Kennedy, and to shoot his grouse, and to stalk his deer, and to help to keep him in progress as a liberal member of Parliament. I am quite prepared to admit, as his friend, that he would go back without some such help."

"Oh; — I understand."

"I do not believe that you do understand at all, but I must endeavour to make you do so by degrees. If you are to be my political pupil, you must at any rate be obedient. The next time you meet Mr. Kennedy, ask him his opinion instead of telling him your own. He has been in Parliament twelve years, and he was a good deal older than you when he began." At this moment a side door was opened, and the red-haired, red-bearded man whom Phineas had seen before entered the room. He hesitated a moment, as though he were going to retreat again, and then began to pull about the books and toys which lay on one of the distant tables, as though he were in quest of some article. And he would have retreated had not Lady Laura called to him.

"Oswald," she said, "let me introduce you to Mr. Finn. Mr. Finn, I do not think you have ever met my brother, Lord Chiltern." Then the two young men bowed, and each of them muttered something. "Do not be in a hurry, Oswald. You have nothing special to take you away. Here is Mr. Finn come to tell us who are all the possible new Prime Ministers. He is uncivil enough not to have named papa."

"My father is out of the question," said Lord Chiltern.

"Of course he is," said Lady Laura; "but I may be allowed my little joke."

"I suppose he will at any rate be in the Cabinet," said Phineas.

"I know nothing whatever about politicks," said Lord Chiltern.

"I wish you did," said his sister, — "with all my heart."

"I never did, — and I never shall, for all your wishing. It's the meanest trade going I think, and I'm sure it's the most dishonest. They talk of legs on the turf, and of course there are legs; but what are they to the legs in the House. I don't know whether you are in Parliament, Mr. Finn."

"Yes, I am; but do not mind me."

"I beg your pardon. Of course there are honest men there, and no doubt you are one of them."

"He is indifferent honest, — as yet," said Lady Laura.

"I was speaking of men who go into Parliament to look after Government places," said Lord Chiltern.

"That is just what I'm doing," said Phineas. "Why should not a man serve the Crown? He has to work very hard for what he earns."

"I don't believe that the most of them work at all. However, I beg your pardon. I didn't mean you in particular."

"Mr. Finn is such a thorough politician that he will never forgive you," said Lady Laura.

"Yes, I will," said Phineas, "and I'll convert him some day. If he does come into the House, Lady Laura, I suppose he'll come on the right side?"

"I'll never go into the House, as you call it," said Lord Chiltern. "But, I'll tell you what; I shall be very happy if you'll dine with me to-morrow at Moroni's. They give you a capital little dinner at Moroni's, and they've the best Chateau Yquem in London."

"Do," said Lady Laura, in a whisper. "Oblige me."

Phineas was engaged to dine with one of the Vice-Chancellors on the day named. He had never before dined at the house of this great law luminary, whose acquaintance he had made through Mr. Low, and he had thought a great deal of the occasion. Mrs. Freemantle had sent him the invitation nearly a fortnight ago, and he understood there was to be an elaborate dinner party. He did not know it for a fact, but he was in hopes of meeting the expiring Lord Chan-

cellor. He considered it to be his duty never to throw away such a chance. He would in all respects have preferred Mr. Freemantle's dinner in Eaton Place, dull and heavy though it might probably be, to the chance of Lord Chiltern's companions at Moroni's. Whatever might be the faults of our hero, he was not given to what is generally called dissipation by the world at large,—by which the world means self-indulgence. He cared not a brass farthing for Moroni's Chateau Yquem, nor for the wondrously studied repast which he would doubtless find prepared for him at that celebrated establishment in St. James's Street;—not a farthing as compared with the chance of meeting so great a man as Lord Moles. And Lord Chiltern's friends might probably be just the men whom he would not desire to know. But Lady Laura's request overrode everything with him. She had asked him to oblige her, and of course he would do so. Had he been going to dine with the incoming Prime Minister, he would have put off his engagement at her request. He was not quick enough to make an answer without hesitation; but after a moment's pause he said that he should be most happy to dine with Lord Chiltern at Moroni's.

"That's right; 7.30 sharp,—only I can tell you you won't meet any other members." Then the servant announced more visitors, and Lord Chiltern escaped out of the room before he was seen by the new comers. These were Mrs. Bonteen, and Laurence Fitzgibbon, and then Mr. Bonteen,—and after them Mr. Ratler, the Whip, who was in a violent hurry, and did not stay there a moment, and then Barrington Erie and young Lord James Fitz-Howard, the youngest son of the Duke of St. Bungay. In twenty or thirty minutes there was a gathering of liberal political notabilities in Lady Laura's drawing-room. There were two great pieces of news by which they were all enthralled. Mr. Mildmay would not be Prime Minister, and Sir Everard Powell was—dead. Of course nothing quite positive could be known about Mr. Mildmay. He was to be with the Queen at Windsor on the morrow at eleven o'clock, and it was improbable that he would tell his mind to any one before he told it to her Majesty. But there was no doubt that he had engaged "the Duke,"—so he was called by Lord James,—to go down to Windsor with him, that he might be in readiness if wanted. "I have learned that at home," said Lord James, who had just heard the news from his sister, who had heard it from the Duchess. Lord James was delighted

with the importance given to him by his father's coming journey. From this, and from other equally well-known circumstances, it was surmised that Mr. Mildmay would decline the task proposed to him. This, nevertheless, was only a surmise,—whereas the fact with reference to Sir Everard was fully substantiated. The gout had flown to his stomach, and he was dead. "By—yes; as dead as a herring," said Mr. Ratler, who at that moment, however, was not without hearing of either of the ladies present. And then he rubbed his hands, and looked as though he were delighted. And he was delighted,—not because his old friend Sir Everard was dead, but by the excitement of the tragedy. "Having done so good a deed in his last moments," said Laurence Fitzgibbon, "we may take it for granted that he will go straight to heaven." "I hope there will be no coroner's quest, Ratler," said Mr. Bonteen; "if there is I don't know how you'll get out of it." "I don't see anything in it so horrible," said Mr. Ratler. "If a fellow dies leading his regiment we don't think anything of it. Sir Everard's vote was of more service to his country than anything that a colonel or a captain can do." But nevertheless I think that Mr. Ratler was somewhat in dread of future newspaper paragraphs, should it be found necessary to summon a coroner's inquest to sit upon poor Sir Everard.

While this was going on Lady Laura took Phineas apart for a moment. "I am so much obliged to you; I am indeed," she said.

"What nonsense."

"Never mind whether it's nonsense or not;—but I am. I can't explain it all now, but I do so want you to know my brother. You may be of the greatest service to him,—of the very greatest. He is not half so bad as people say he is. In many ways he is very good,—very good. And he is very clever."

"At any rate I will think and believe no ill of him."

"Just so;—do not believe evil of him,—not more evil than you see. I am so anxious,—so very anxious to try to put him on his legs, and I find it so difficult to get any connecting link with him. Papa will not speak with him,—because of money."

"But he is friends with you."

"Yes; I think he loves me. I saw how distasteful it was to you to go to him;—and probably you were engaged?"

"One can always get off those sort of things if there is an object."

"Yes; — just so. And the object was to oblige me; — was it not?"

"Of course it was. But I must go now. We are to hear Daubeny's statement at four, and I would not miss it for worlds."

"I wonder whether you would go abroad with my brother in the autumn? But I have no right to think of such a thing; — have I? At any rate I will not think of it yet. Good-bye, — I shall see you perhaps on Sunday if you are in town."

Phineas walked down to Westminster with his mind very full of Lady Laura and Lord Chiltern. What did she mean by her affectionate manner to himself, and what did she mean by the continual praises which she lavished upon Mr. Kennedy? Of whom was she thinking most, of Mr. Kennedy, or of him? She had called herself his mentor. Was the description of her feelings towards himself, as conveyed in that name, of a kind to be gratifying to him? No; — he thought not. But then might it not be within his power to change the nature of those feelings? She was not in love with him at present. He could not make any boast to himself on that head. But it might be within his power to compel her to love him. The female mentor might be softened. That she could not love Mr. Kennedy, he thought that he was quite sure. There was nothing like love in her manner to Mr. Kennedy. As to Lord Chiltern, Phineas would do whatever might be in his power. All that he really knew of Lord Chiltern was that he had gambled and that he had drunk.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

In the House of Lords that night, and in the House of Commons, the outgoing Ministers made their explanations. As our business at the present moment is with the Commons, we will confine ourselves to their chamber, and will do so the more willingly because the upshot of what was said in the two places was the same. The outgoing Ministers were very grave, very self-laudatory, and very courteous. In regard to courtesy it may be declared that no stranger to the ways of the place could have understood how such soft words could be spoken by Mr. Daubeny, beaten, so quickly after the very sharp words which he had uttered when he only expected to be beaten. He announced to his fellow-commoners that his right honourable friend and colleague Lord De Terrier had thought it right to re-

tire from the Treasury. Lord De Terrier, in constitutional obedience to the vote of the Lower House, had resigned, and the Queen had been graciously pleased to accept Lord De Terrier's resignation. Mr. Daubeny could only further inform the House that her Majesty had signified her pleasure that Mr. Mildmay should wait upon her to-morrow at eleven o'clock. Mr. Mildmay, — so Mr. Daubeny understood, — would be with her Majesty tomorrow at that hour. Lord De Terrier had found it to be his duty to recommend her Majesty to send for Mr. Mildmay. Such was the real import of Mr. Daubeny's speech. That further portion of it in which he explained with blandest, most beneficent, honey-flowing words that his party would have done everything that the country could require of any party, had the House allowed it to remain on the Treasury benches for a month or two, — and explained also that his party would never recriminate, would never return evil for evil, would in no wise copy the factious opposition of their adversaries; that his party would now, as it ever had done, carry itself with the meekness of the dove and the wisdom of the serpent, — all this, I say, was so generally felt by gentlemen on both sides of the House to be "leather and prunella," that very little attention was paid to it. The great point was that Lord De Terrier had resigned and that Mr. Mildmay had been summoned to Windsor.

The Queen had sent for Mr. Mildmay in compliance with advice given to her by Lord De Terrier. And yet Lord De Terrier and his first lieutenant had used all the most practised efforts of their eloquence for the last three days in endeavouring to make their countrymen believe that no more unfitting Minister than Mr. Mildmay ever attempted to hold the reins of office! Nothing had been too bad for them to say of Mr. Mildmay, — and yet, in the very first moment in which they found themselves unable to carry on the Government themselves, they advised the Queen to send for that most incompetent and baneful statesman! We who are conversant with our own methods of politics, see nothing odd in this, because we are used to it; but surely in the eyes of strangers our practice must be very singular. There is nothing like it in any other country, — nothing as yet. Nowhere else is there the same good-humoured, affectionate, prize-fighting ferocity in politics. The leaders of our two great parties are to each other exactly as are the two champions of the ring who knock each oth-

er about for the belt and for five hundred pounds a-side once in every two years. How they fly at each other, striking as though each blow should carry death if it were but possible! And yet there is no one whom the Birmingham Bantam respects so highly as he does Bill Burns the Brighton Bully, or with whom he has so much delight in discussing the merits of a pot of half-and-half. And so it was with Mr. Daubeny and Mr. Mildmay. In private life Mr. Daubeny almost adulated his elder rival, — and Mr. Mildmay never omitted an opportunity of taking Mr. Daubeny warmly by the hand. It is not so in the United States. There the same political enmity exists, but the political enmity produces private hatred. The leaders of parties there really mean what they say when they abuse each other, and are in earnest when they talk as though they were about to tear each other limb from limb. I doubt whether Mr. Daubeny would have injured a hair of Mr. Mildmay's venerable head, even for an assurance of six continued months in office.

When Mr. Daubeny had completed his statement, Mr. Mildmay simply told the House that he had received and would obey her Majesty's commands. The House would of course understand that he by no means meant to aver that the Queen would even commission him to form a Ministry. But if he took no such command from her Majesty it would become his duty to recommend her Majesty to impose the task upon some other person. Then everything was said that had to be said, and members returned to their clubs. A certain damp was thrown over the joy of some excitable Liberals by tidings which reached the House during Mr. Daubeny's speech. Sir Everard Powell was no more dead than was Mr. Daubeny himself. Now it is very unpleasant to find that your news is untrue, when you have been at great pains to disseminate it. "Oh, but he is dead," said Mr. Ratler. "Lady Powell assured me half an hour ago," said Mr. Ratler's opponent, "that he was at that moment a great deal better than he has been for the last three months. The journey down to the House did him a world of good." "Then we'll have him down for every division," said Mr. Ratler.

The political portion of London was in a ferment for the next five days. On the Sunday morning it was known that Mr. Mildmay had declined to put himself at the head of a liberal Government. He and the Duke of St. Bungay, and Mr. Plantagenet Palliser, had been in conference so often, and so long, that it may almost be said they

lived together in conference. Then Mr. Gresham had been with Mr. Mildmay, — and Mr. Monk also. At the clubs it was said by many that Mr. Monk had been with Mr. Mildmay; but it was also said very vehemently by others that no such interview had taken place. Mr. Monk was a Radical, much admired by the people, sitting in Parliament for that most Radical of all constituencies, the Pottery Hamlets, who had never as yet been in power. It was the great question of the day whether Mr. Mildmay would or would not ask Mr. Monk to join him; and it was said by those who habitually think at every period of change that the time has now come in which the difficulties to forming a government will at last be found to be insuperable, that Mr. Mildmay could not succeed either with Mr. Monk or without him. There were at the present moment two sections of these gentlemen, — the section which declared that Mr. Mildmay had sent for Mr. Monk, and the section which declared that he had not. But there were others; who perhaps knew better what they were saying, by whom it was asserted that the whole difficulty lay with Mr. Gresham. Mr. Gresham was willing to serve with Mr. Mildmay, — with certain stipulations as to the special seat in the Cabinet which he himself was to occupy, and as to the introduction of certain friends of his own; but, — so said these gentlemen who were supposed really to understand the matter, — Mr. Gresham was not willing to serve with the Duke and with Mr. Palliser. Now, everybody who knew anything knew that the Duke and Mr. Palliser were indispensable to Mr. Mildmay. And a liberal Government, with Mr. Gresham in the opposition, could not live half through a session! All Sunday and Monday these things were discussed; and on the Monday Lord De Terrier absolutely stated to the Upper House that he had received her Majesty's commands to form another government. Mr. Daubeny, in half a dozen most modest words, — in words hardly audible, and most unlike himself, — made his statement in the Lower House to the same effect. Then Mr. Ratler, and Mr. Bonteen, and Mr. Barrington Erle, and Mr. Laurence Fitzgibbon aroused themselves and swore that such things could not be. Should the prey which they had won for themselves, the spoil of their bows and arrows, be snatched from out of their very mouths by treachery. Lord De Terrier and Mr. Daubeny could not venture even to make another attempt unless they did so in combination with Mr. Gresham. Such a combination, said Mr. Barrington

Erle, would be disgraceful to both parties, but would prove Mr. Gresham to be as false as Satan himself. Early on the Tuesday morning, when it was known that Mr. Gresham had been at Lord De Terrier's house, Barrington Erle was free to confess that he had always been afraid of Mr. Gresham. "I have felt for years," said he, "that if anybody could break up the party it would be Mr. Gresham."

On that Tuesday morning Mr. Gresham certainly was with Lord De Terrier, but nothing came of it. Mr. Gresham was either not enough like Satan for the occasion, or else he was too closely like him. Lord De Terrier did not bid high enough, or else Mr. Gresham did not like biddings from that quarter. Nothing then came from this attempt, and on the Tuesday afternoon the Queen again sent for Mr. Mildmay. On the Wednesday morning the gentlemen who thought that the insuperable difficulties had at length arrived, began to wear their longest faces, and to be triumphant with melancholy forebodings. Now at last there was a dead lock. Nobody could form a government. It was asserted that Mr. Mildmay had fallen at her Majesty's feet dissolved in tears, and had implored to be relieved from further responsibility. It was well known to many at the clubs that the Queen had on that morning telegraphed to Germany for advice. There were men so gloomy as to declare that the Queen must throw herself into the arms of Mr. Monk, unless Mr. Mildmay would consent to rise from his knees and once more buckle on his ancient armour. "Even that would be better than Gresham," said Barrington Erle, in his anger. "I'll tell you what it is," said Ratler, "we shall have Gresham and Monk together, and you and I shall have to do their biddings." Mr. Barrington Erle's reply to that suggestion I may not dare to insert in these pages.

On the Wednesday night, however, it was known that everything had been arranged, and before the Houses met on the Thursday every place had been bestowed, either in reality or in imagination. The *Times*, in its second edition on the Thursday, gave a list of the Cabinet, in which four places out of fourteen were rightly filled. On the Friday it named ten places aright, and indicated the law officers, with only one mistake in reference to Ireland; and on the Saturday it gave a list of the Under Secretaries of State, and Secretaries and Vice-Presidents generally,

with wonderful correctness as to the individuals, though the offices were a little jumbled. The Government was at last formed in a manner which everybody had seen to be the only possible way in which a government could be formed. Nobody was surprised, and the week's work was regarded as though the regular routine of government making had simply been followed. Mr. Midway was Prime Minister; Mr. Gresham was at the Foreign Office; Mr. Monk was at the Board of Trade; the Duke was President of the Council; the Earl of Brentford was Privy Seal; and Mr. Palliser was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Barrington Erle made a step up in the world, and went to the Admiralty as Secretary; Mr. Bonteen was sent again to the Admiralty; and Laurence Fitzgibbon became a junior Lord of the Treasury. Mr. Ratler was, of course, installed as Patronage Secretary to the same Board. Mr. Ratler was perhaps the only man in the party as to whose destination there could not possibly be a doubt. Mr. Ratler had really qualified himself for a position in such a way as to make all men feel that he would, as a matter of course, be called upon to fill it. I do not know whether as much could be said on behalf of any other man in the new Government.

During all this excitement, and through all these movements, Phineas Finn felt himself to be left more and more out in the cold. He had not been such a fool as to suppose that any office would be offered to him. He had never hinted at such a thing to his one dearly intimate friend, Lady Laura. He had not hitherto opened his mouth in Parliament. Indeed, when the new Government was formed he had not been sitting for above a fortnight. Of course nothing could be done for him as yet. But, nevertheless, he felt himself to be out in the cold. The very men who had discussed with him the question of the division,—who had discussed it with him because his vote was then as good as that of any other member,—did not care to talk to him about the distribution of places. He, at any rate, could not be one of them. He, at any rate, could not be a rival. He could neither mar nor assist. He could not be either a successful or a disappointed sympathiser,—because he could not himself be a candidate. The affair which perhaps disgusted him more than anything else was the offer of an office,—not in the Cabinet, indeed, but one supposed to confer high dignity,—to Mr. Kennedy. Mr. Ken-

nedy refused the offer, and this somewhat lessened Finn's disgust, but the offer itself made him unhappy.

"I suppose it was made simply because of his money," he said to Fitzgibbon.

"I don't believe that," said Fitzgibbon. "People seem to think that he has got a head on his shoulders, though he has got no tongue in it. I wonder at his refusing it because of the Right Honourable."

"I am so glad that Mr. Kennedy refused," said Lady Laura to him.

"And why? He would have been the Right Hon. Robert Kennedy for ever and ever." Phineas when he said this did not as yet know exactly how it would have come to pass that such honour,—the honour of that enduring prefix to his name,—would have come in the way of Mr. Kennedy had Mr. Kennedy accepted the office in question; but he was very quick to learn all these things, and, in the meantime, he rarely made any mistake about them.

"What would that have been to him,—with his wealth?" said Lady Laura. "He has a position of his own and need not care for such things. There are men who should not attempt what is called independence in Parliament. By doing so they simply decline to make themselves useful. But there are a few whose special walk in life it is to be independent, and, as it were, unmoved by parties."

"Great Akinetoses! You know Orion," said Phineas.

"Mr. Kennedy is not an Akinetos," said Lady Laura.

"He holds a very proud position," said Phineas, ironically.

"A very proud position indeed," said Lady Laura, in sober earnest.

The dinner at Moroni's had been eaten, and Phineas had given an account of the entertainment to Lord Chiltern's sister. There had been only two other guests, and both of them had been men on the turf. "I was the first there," said Phineas, "and he surprised me ever so much by telling me that you had spoken to him of me before."

"Yes; I did so. I wish him to know you. I want him to know some men who think of nothing besides horses. He is very well educated, you know, and would certainly have taken honours if he had not quarrelled with the people at Christ Church."

"Did he take a degree?"

"No;—they sent him down. It is best always to have the truth among friends. Of course you will hear it some day. They expelled him, because he was drunk."

Then Lady Laura burst out into tears, and Phineas sat near her, and consoled her, and swore that if in any way he could befriend her brother he would do so.

Mr. Fitzgibbon at this time claimed a promise which he said that Phineas had made to him,—that Phineas would go over with him to Mayo to assist at his re-election. And Phineas did go. The whole affair occupied but a week, and was chiefly memorable as being the means of cementing the friendship which existed between the two Irish members.

"A thousand a year!" said Laurence Fitzgibbon, speaking of the salary of his office. "It isn't much; is it? And every fellow to whom I owe a shilling will be down upon me. If I had studied my own comfort, I should have done the same as Kennedy."

CHAPTER X.

VIOLET EFFINGHAM.

It was now the middle of May, and a month had elapsed since the terrible difficulty about the Queen's Government had been solved. A month had elapsed, and things had shaken themselves into their places with more of ease and apparent fitness than men had given them credit for possessing. Mr. Mildmay, Mr. Gresham, and Mr. Monk were the best friends in the world, swearing by each other in their own house, and supported in the other by as gallant a phalanx of Whig peers as ever were got together to fight against the instincts of their own order in compliance with the instincts of those below them. Lady Laura's father was in the Cabinet, to Lady Laura's infinite delight. It was her ambition to be brought as near to political action as was possible for a woman without surrendering any of the privileges of feminine inaction. That women should even wish to have votes at parliamentary elections was to her abominable, and the cause of the Rights of Women generally was odious to her; but, nevertheless, for herself, she delighted in hoping that she too might be useful,—in thinking that she too was perhaps, in some degree, politically powerful; and she had received considerable increase to such hopes when her father accepted the Privy Seal. The Earl himself was not an ambitious man, and, but for his daughter, would have severed himself altogether from political life before this time. He was an unhappy man;—being an obsti-

nate man, and having in his obstinacy quarrelled with his only son. In his unhappiness he would have kept himself alone, living in the country, brooding over his wretchedness, were it not for his daughter. On her behalf, and in obedience to her requirements, he came yearly up to London, and, perhaps in compliance with her persuasion, had taken some part in the debates of the House of Lords. It is easy for a peer to be a statesman, if the trouble of the life be not too much for him. Lord Brentford was now a statesman, if a seat in the Cabinet be proof of statesmanship.

At this time, in May, there was staying with Lady Laura in Portman Square a very dear friend of hers, by name Violet Effingham. Violet Effingham was an orphan, an heiress, and a beauty; with a terrible aunt, one Lady Baldock, who was supposed to be the dragon who had Violet, as a captive maiden, in charge. But as Miss Effingham was of age, and was mistress of her own fortune, Lady Baldock was, in truth, not omnipotent as a dragon should be. The dragon, at any rate, was not now staying in Portman Square, and the captivity of the maiden was therefore not severe at the present moment. Violet Effingham was very pretty, but could hardly be said to be beautiful. She was small, with light crispy hair, which seemed to be ever on the flutter round her brows, and which yet was never a hair astray. She had sweet, soft grey eyes, which never looked at you long, hardly for a moment,—but which yet, in that half moment, nearly killed you by the power of their sweetness. Her cheek was the softest thing in nature, and the colour of it, when its colour was fixed enough to be told, was a shade of pink so faint and creamy that you would hardly dare to call it by its name. Her mouth was perfect, not small enough to give that expression of silliness which is so common, but almost divine, with the temptation of its full, rich, ruby lips. Her teeth, which she but seldom showed, were very even and very white, and there rested on her chin the dearest dimple that ever acted as a loadstar to men's eyes. The fault of her face, if it had a fault, was in her nose,—which was a little too sharp, and perhaps too small. A woman who wanted to depreciate Violet Effingham had once called her a pug-nosed puppet; but I, as her chronicler, deny that she was pug-nosed,—and all the world who knew her soon came to understand that she was no puppet. In figure she was small, but not so small as she looked to be. Her feet and hands were delicately fine, and there was a softness about her whole person, an

apparent compressibility, which seemed to indicate that she might go into very small compass. Into what compass and how compressed, there were very many men who held very different opinions. Violet Effingham was certainly no puppet. She was great at dancing,—as perhaps might be a puppet,—but she was great also at archery, great at skating—and great too, at hunting. With reference to that last accomplishment, she and Lady Baldock had had more than one terrible tussle, not always with advantage to the dragon. "My dear aunt," she had said once during the last winter, "I am going to the meet with George,"—George was her cousin, Lord Baldock, and was the dragon's son,—"and there, let there be an end of it." "And you promise me that you will not go further," said the dragon. "I will promise nothing to-day to any man or to any woman," said Violet. What was to be said to a young lady who spoke in this way, and who had become of age only a fortnight since? She rode that day the famous run from Bagnall's Gorse to Foulsham Common, and was in at the death.

Violet Effingham was now sitting in conference with her friend Lady Laura, and they were discussing matters of high import,—of very high import, indeed,—to the interests of both of them. "I do not ask you to accept him," said Lady Laura.

"That is lucky," said the other, "as he has never asked me."

"He has done much the same. You know that he loves you."

"I know,—or fancy that I know,—that so many men love me! But, after all, what sort of love is it? It is just as when you and I, when we see something nice in a shop, call it a dear duck of a thing, and tell somebody to go and buy it, let the price be ever so extravagant. I know my own position, Laura. I'm a dear duck of a thing."

"You are a very dear thing to Oswald."

"But you, Laura, will some day inspire a grand passion,—or I daresay have already, for you are a great deal too close to tell;—and then there will be cutting of throats, and a mighty hubbub, and a real tragedy. I shall never go beyond genteel comedy,—unless I run away with somebody beneath me, or do something awfully improper."

"Don't do that, dear."

"I should like to, because of my aunt. I should indeed. If it were possible, without compromising myself, I should like her to be told some morning that I had gone off with the curate."

"How can you be so wicked, Violet!"

"It would serve her right,—and her countenance would be so awfully comic. Mind, if it is ever to come off, I must be there to see it. I know what she would say as well as possible. She would turn to poor Gussy. 'Augusta,' she would say, 'I always expected it. I always did. Then I should come out and curtsey to her, and say so prettily, 'Dear aunt, it was only our little joke.' That's my line. But for you,—you, if you planned it, would go off to-morrow with Lucifer himself if you liked him."

"But failing Lucifer, I shall probably be very humdrum."

"You don't mean that there is anything settled, Laura?"

"There is nothing settled,—or any beginning of anything that ever can be settled. But I am not talking about myself. He has told me that if you will accept him, he will do anything that you and I may ask him."

"Yes;—he will promise."

"Did you ever know him to break his word?"

"I know nothing about him, my dear. How should I?"

"Do not pretend to be ignorant and meek, Violet. You do know him,—much better than most girls know the men they marry. You have known him, more or less intimate, all your life."

"But am I bound to marry him because of that accident?"

"No; you are not bound to marry him,—unless you love him."

"I do not love him," said Violet, with slow, emphatic words, and a little forward motion of her face, as though she were specially eager to convince her friend that she was quite in earnest in what she said.

"I fancy, Violet, that you are nearer to loving him than any other man."

"I am not at all near to loving any man. I doubt whether I ever shall be. It does not seem to me to be possible to myself to be what girls call in love. I can like a man. I do like, perhaps, half a dozen. I like them so much that if I go to a house or to a party it is quite a matter of importance to me whether this man or that will or will not be there. And then I suppose I flirt with them. At least Augusta tells me that my aunt says that I do. But as for caring about any one of them in the way of loving him,—wanting to marry him, and have him all to myself, and that sort of thing,—I don't know what it means."

"But you intend to be married some day," said Lady Laura.

"Certainly I do. And I don't intend to wait very much longer. I am heartily tired of Lady Baldock, and though I can generally escape among my friends, that is not sufficient. I am beginning to think that it would be pleasant to have a house of my own. A girl becomes such a Bohemian when she is always going about, and doesn't quite know where any of her things are."

Then there was silence between them for a few minutes. Violet Effingham was doubled up in a corner of a sofa, with her feet tucked under her, and her face reclining upon one of her shoulders. And as she talked she was playing with a little toy, which was constructed to take various shapes as it was flung this way or that. A bystander looking at her would have thought that the toy was much more to her than the conversation. Lady Laura was sitting upright, in a common chair, at a table not far from her companion, and was manifestly devoting herself altogether to the subject that was being discussed between them. She had taken no lounging, easy attitude, she had found no employment for her fingers, and she looked steadily at Violet as she talked;—whereas Violet was looking only at the little manikin which she tossed. And now Laura got up and came to the sofa, and sat close to her friend. Violet, though she somewhat moved one foot, so as to seem to make room for the other, still went on with her play.

"If you do marry, Violet, you must choose some one man out of the lot."

"That's quite true, my dear. I certainly can't marry them all."

"And how do you mean to make the choice?"

"I don't know. I suppose I shall toss up."

"I wish you would be in earnest with me."

"Well;—I will be in earnest. I shall take the first that comes after I have quite made up my mind. You'll think it very horrible, but that is really what I shall do. After all, a husband is very much like a house or a horse. You don't take your house because it's the best house in the world, but because just then you want a house. You go and see a house, and if it's very nasty you don't take it. But if you think it will suit pretty well, and if you are tired of looking about for houses, you do take it. That's the way one buys one's horses,—and one's husbands."

"And you have not made up your mind yet?"

"Not quite. Lady Ballock was a little more decent than usual just before I left Baddingham. When I told her that I meant to have a pair of ponies, she merely threw up her hands and grunted. She didn't gnash her teeth, and curse and swear, and declare to me that I was a child of perdition."

"What do you mean by cursing and swearing?"

"She told me once that if I bought a certain little dog, it would lead to my being everlasting — you know what. She isn't so squeamish as I am, and said it out."

"What did you do?"

"I bought the little dog, and it bit my aunt's heel. I was very sorry then, and gave the creature to Mary Rivers. He was such a beauty! I hope the perdition has gone with him, for I don't like Mary Rivers at all. I had to give the poor beastie to somebody, and Mary Rivers happened to be there. I told her that Puck was connected with Apollyon, but she didn't mind that. Puck was worth twenty guineas, and I dare-say she has sold him."

"Oswald may have an equal chance then among the other favourites?" said Lady Laura, after another pause.

"There are no favourites, and I will not say that any man may have a chance. Why do you press me about your brother in this way?"

"Because I am so anxious. Because it would save him. Because you are the only woman for whom he has ever cared, and because he loves you with all his heart; and because his father would be reconciled to him to-morrow if he heard that you and he were engaged."

"Laura, my dear" —

"Well."

"You won't be angry if I speak out?"

"Certainly not. After what I have said, you have a right to speak out."

"It seems to me that all your reasons are reasons why he should marry me; — not reasons why I should marry him."

"Is not his love for you a reason?"

"No," said Violet, pausing, — and speaking the word in the lowest possible whisper. "If he did not love me, that, if known to me, should be a reason why I should not marry him. Ten men may love me, — I don't say that any man does," —

"He does."

"But I can't marry all the ten. And as for that business of saving him" —

"You know what I mean?"

"I don't know that I have any special mission for saving young men. I sometimes think that I shall have quite enough to do to save myself. It is strange what a propensity I feel for the wrong side of the post."

"I feel the strongest assurance that you will always keep on the right side."

"Thank you, my dear. I mean to try, but I'm quite sure that the jockey who takes me in hand ought to be very steady himself. Now, Lord Chiltern" —

"Well, — out with it. What have you to say?"

"He does not bear the best reputation in this world as a steady man. Is he altogether the sort of man that mammas of the best kind are seeking for their daughters? I like a roué myself; — and a prig who sits all night in the House, and talks about nothing but church-rates and suffrage, is to me intolerable. I prefer men who are improper, and all that sort of thing. If I were a man myself I should go in for everything I ought to leave alone. I know I should. But you see, — I'm not a man, and I must take care of myself. The wrong side of the post for a woman is so very much the wrong side. I like a fast man, but I know that I must not dare to marry the sort of man that I like."

"To be one of us then, — the very first among us; — would that be the wrong side?"

"You mean that to be Lady Chiltern in the present tense, and Lady Brentford in the future, would be promotion for Violet Evingham in the past?"

"How hard you are, Violet?"

"Fancy, — that it should come to this, — that you should call me hard, Laura. I should like to be your sister. I should like well enough to be your father's daughter. I should like well enough to be Chiltern's friend. I am his friend. Nothing that any one has ever said of him has estranged me from him. I have fought for him till I have been black in the face. Yes, I have, — with my aunt. But I am afraid to be his wife. The risk would be so great. Suppose that I did not save him, but that he brought me to shipwreck instead?"

"That could not be!"

"Could it not? I think it might be so very well. When I was a child they used to be always telling me to mind myself. It seems to me that a child and a man need not mind themselves. Let them do what they may, they can be set right again. Let them fall as they will, you can put them on their feet. But a woman has to mind her-

self ;— and very hard work it is when she has a dragon of her own driving her ever the wrong way."

" I want to take you from the dragon."

" Yes ;— and to hand me over to a griffin."

" The truth is, Violet, that you do not know Oswald. He is not a griffin."

" I did not mean to be uncomplimentary. Take any of the dangerous wild beasts you please. I merely intend to point out that he is a dangerous wild beast. I daresay he is noble-minded, and I will call him a lion if you like it better. But even with a lion there is risk."

" Of course there will be risk. There is risk with every man,— unless you will be contented with the prig you described. Of course, there would be risk with my brother. He has been a gambler."

" They say he is one still."

" He has given it up in part, and would entirely at your instance."

" And they say other things of him, Laura."

" It is true. He has had paroxysms of evil life which have well-nigh ruined him."

" And those paroxysms are so dangerous ! Is he not in debt ?"

" He is,— but not deeply. Every shilling that he owes would be paid ;— every shilling. Mind, I know all his circumstances, and I give you my word that every shilling should be paid. He has never lied,— and he has told me every thing. His father could not leave an acre away from him if he would, and would not if he could."

" I did not ask as fearing that. I spoke only of a dangerous habit. A paroxysm of spending money is apt to make one so uncomfortable. And then"—

" Well."

" I don't know why I should make a catalogue of your brother's weaknesses."

" You mean to say that he drinks too much ?"

" I do not say so. People say so. The dragon says so. And as I always find her sayings to be untrue, I suppose this is like the rest of them."

" It is untrue,— if it be said of him as a habit."

" It is another paroxysm,— just now and then."

" Do not laugh at me, Violet, when I am taking his part, or I shall be offended."

" But you see, if I am to be his wife, it is — rather important."

" Still you need not ridicule me."

" Dear Laura, you know I do not ridicule you. You know I love you for what you

are doing. Would not I do the same, and fight for him down to my nails, if I had a brother?"

" And therefore I want you to be Oswald's wife ;— because I know that you would fight for him. It is not true that he is a — drunkard. Look at his hand, which is as steady as yours. Look at his eye. Is there a sign of it ? He has been drunk once or twice perhaps, — and has done fearful things."

" It might be that he would do fearful things to me."

" You never knew a man with a softer heart or with a finer spirit. I believe as I sit here that if he were married to-morrow, his vices would fall from him like old clothes."

" You will admit, Laura, that there will be some risk for the wife."

" Of course there will be a risk. Is there not always a risk ?"

" The men in the city would call this double-dangerous, I think," said Violet. Then the door was opened, and the man of whom they were speaking entered the room.

CHAPTER XI.

LORD CHILTERN.

THE reader has been told that Lord Chiltern was a red man, and that peculiarity of his personal appearance was certainly the first to strike a stranger. It imparted a certain look of ferocity to him, which was apt to make men afraid of him at first sight. Women are not actuated in the same way, and are accustomed to look deeper into men at the first sight than other men will trouble themselves to do. His beard was red, and was clipped, so as to have none of the softness of waving hair. The hair on his head also was kept short, and was very red,— and the colour of his face was red. Nevertheless he was a handsome man, with well-cut features, not tall, but very strongly built, and with a certain curl in the corner of his eyelids which gave to him a look of resolution, — which perhaps he did not possess. He was known to be a clever man, and when very young had had the reputation of being a scholar. When he was three-and-twenty grey-haired votaries of the turf declared that he would make his fortune on the race-course, — so clear-headed was he as to odds, so excellent a judge of a horse's performances, and so gifted with a memory of events. When he was five-and-twenty he had lost every shilling of a

fortune of his own, had squeezed from his father more than his father ever chose to name in speaking of his affairs to any one, and was known to be in debt. But he had sacrificed himself on one or two memorable occasions in conformity with turf laws of honour, and men said of him, either that he was very honest or very chivalric, — in accordance with the special views on the subject of the man who was speaking. It was reported now that he no longer owned horses on the turf; — but this was doubted by some who could name the animals which they said that he owned, and which he ran in the name of Mr. Macnab, — said some; of Mr. Pardoe, — said others; of Mr. Chickewick, — said a third set of informants. The fact was that Lord Chiltern at this moment had no interest of his own in any horse upon the turf.

But all the world knew that he drank. He had taken by the throat a proctor's bulldog when he had been drunk at Oxford, had nearly strangled the man, and had been expelled. He had fallen through his violence into some terrible misfortune at Paris, had been brought before a public judge, and his name and his infamy had been made notorious in every newspaper in the two capitals. After that he had fought a ruffian at Newmarket, and had really killed him with his fists. In reference to this latter affray it had been proved that the attack had been made on him, that he had not been to blame, and that he had not been drunk. After a prolonged investigation he had come forth from that affair without disgrace. He would have done so, at least, if he had not been heretofore disgraced. But we all know how the man well spoken of may steal a horse, while he who is of evil repute may not look over a hedge. It was asserted widely by many who were supposed to know all about everything that Lord Chiltern was in a fit of delirium tremens when he killed the ruffian at Newmarket. The worst of that latter affair was that it produced the total estrangement which now existed between Lord Brentford and his son. Lord Brentford would not believe that his son was in that matter more sinned against than sinning. "Such things do not happen to other men's sons," he said, when Lady Laura pleaded for her brother. Lady Laura could not induce her father to see his son, but so far prevailed that no sentence of banishment was pronounced against Lord Chiltern. There was nothing to prevent the son sitting at his father's table if he so pleased. He never did so please, — but nevertheless he continued to live in the

house in Portman Square; and when he met the Earl, in the hall, perhaps, or on the staircase, would simply bow to him. Then the Earl would bow again, and shuffle on, — and look very wretched, as no doubt he was. A grown-up son must be the greatest comfort a man can have, — if he be his father's best friend; but otherwise he can hardly be a comfort. As it was in this house, the son was a constant thorn in his father's side.

"What does he do when we leave London?" Lord Brentford once said to his daughter.

"He stays here, papa."

"But he hunts still?"

"Yes, he hunts, — and he has a room somewhere at an inn, — down in Northamptonshire. But he is mostly in London. They have trains on purpose."

"What a life for my son!" said the Earl. "What a life! Of course no decent person will let him into his house." Lady Laura did not know what to say to this, for in truth Lord Chiltern was not fond of staying at the houses of persons whom the Earl would have called decent.

General Effingham, the father of Violet, and Lord Brentford had been the closest and dearest of friends. They had been young men in the same regiment, and through life each had confided in the other. When the General's only son, then a youth of seventeen, was killed in one of our grand New Zealand wars, the bereaved father and the Earl had been together for a month in their sorrow. At that time Lord Chiltern's career had still been open to hope, — and the one man had contrasted his lot with the other. General Effingham lived long enough to hear the Earl declare to him that his lot was the happier of the two. Now the General was dead, and Violet, the daughter of a second wife, was all that was left of the Effinghams. This second wife had been a Miss Plummer, a lady from the city with much money, whose sister had married Lord Baldoeck. Violet in this way had fallen to the care of the Baldoeck people, and not into the hands of her father's friends. But, as the reader will have surmised, she had ideas of her own of emancipating herself from Baldoeck thraldom.

Twice before that last terrible affair at Newmarket, before the quarrel between the father and the son had been complete, Lord Brentford had said a word to his daughter, — merely a word, — of his son in connection with Miss Effingham.

"If he thinks of it I shall be glad to see him on the subject. You may tell him so."

That had been the first word. He had just then resolved that the affair in Paris should be regarded as condoned, — as among the things to be forgotten. "She is too good for him; but if he asks her let him tell her everything." That had been the second word, and had been spoken immediately subsequent to a payment of twelve thousand pounds made by the Earl towards the settlement of certain Doncaster accounts. Lady Laura in negotiating for the money had been very eloquent in describing some honest, — or shall we say chivalric, — sacrifice which had brought her brother into this special difficulty. Since that the Earl had declined to interest himself in his son's matrimonial affairs; and when Lady Laura had once again mentioned the matter, declaring her belief that it would be the means of saving her brother Oswald, the Earl had desired her to be silent. "Would you wish to destroy the poor child?" he had said. Nevertheless Lady Laura felt sure that if she were to go to her father with a positive statement that Oswald and Violet were engaged, he would relent and would accept Violet as his daughter. As for the payment of Lord Chiltern's present debts; — she had a little scheme of her own about that.

Miss Effingham, who had been already two days in Portman Square, had not as yet seen Lord Chiltern. She knew that he lived in the house, — that is, that he slept there, and probably eat his breakfast in some apartment of his own; — but she knew also that the habits of the house would not by any means make it necessary that they should meet. Laura and her brother probably saw each other daily, — but they never went into society together, and did not know the same sets of people. When she had announced to Lady Baldock her intention of spending the first fortnight of her London season with her friend Lady Laura, Lady Baldock had as a matter of course — "jumped upon her," as Miss Effingham would herself call it.

"You are going to the house of the worst reprobate in all England," said Lady Baldock.

"What; — dear old Lord Brentford, whom papa loved so well!"

"I mean Lord Chiltern, who, only last year, — murdered a man!"

"That is not true, aunt."

"There is worse than that, — much worse. He is always — tipsy, and always gambling, and always — But it is quite unfit that I should speak a word more to you about such a man as Lord Chiltern. His name ought never to be mentioned."

"Then why did you mention it, aunt?"

Lady Baldock's process of jumping upon her niece, — in which I think the aunt had generally the worst of the exercise, — went on for some time, but Violet of course carried her point.

"If she marries him there will be an end of everything," said Lady Baldock to her daughter Augusta.

"She has more sense than that, mamma," said Augusta.

"I don't think she has any sense at all," said Lady Baldock; — "not in the least. I do wish my poor sister had lived; — I do indeed."

Lord Chiltern had now entered the room with Violet, — immediately upon that conversation between Violet and his sister as to the expediency of Violet becoming his wife. Indeed his entrance had interrupted the conversation before it was over. "I am so glad to see you, Miss Effingham," he said. "I came in thinking that I might find you."

"Here I am, as large as life," she said, getting up from her corner on the sofa and giving him her hand. "Laura and I have been discussing the affairs of the nation for the last two days, and have nearly brought our discussion to an end." She could not help looking, first at his eye and then at his hand, not as wanting evidence to the truth of the statement which his sister had made, but because the idea of a drunkard's eye and a drunkard's hand had been brought before her mind. Lord Chiltern's hand was like the hand of any other man, but there was something in his eye that almost frightened her. It looked as though he would not hesitate to wring his wife's neck round, if ever he should be brought to threaten to do so. And then his eye, like the rest of him, was red. No; — she did not think that she could ever bring herself to marry him. Why take a venture that was double-dangerous, when there were so many ventures open to her, apparently with very little of danger attached to them. "If it should ever be that I loved him, I would do it all the same," she said to herself.

"If I did not come and see you here, I suppose that I should never see you," said he, seating himself. "I do not often go to parties, and when I do you are not likely to be there."

"We might make our little arrangements for meeting," said she, laughing. "My aunt, Lady Baldock, is going to have an evening next week."

"The servants would be ordered to put me out of the house."

"Oh no. You can tell her that I invited you."

"I don't think that Oswald and Lady Baldock are great friends," said Lady Laura.

"Or he might come and take you and me to the Zoo on Sunday. That's the proper sort of thing for a brother and a friend to do."

"I hate that place in the Regent's Park," said Lord Chiltern.

"When were you there last?" demanded Miss Effingham.

"When I came home once from Eton. But I won't go again till I can come home from Eton again." Then he altered his tone as he continued to speak. "People would look at me as if I were the wildest beast in the whole collection."

"Then," said Violet, "if you won't go to Lady Baldock's or to the Zoo, we must confine ourselves to Laura's drawing-room; — unless, indeed, you like to take me to the top of the Monument."

"I'll take you to the top of the Monument with pleasure."

"What do you say, Laura?"

"I say that you are a foolish girl," said Lady Laura, and that I will have nothing to do with such a scheme."

"Then there is nothing for it but that you should come here; and as you live in the house, and as I am sure to be here every morning, and as you have no possible occupation for your time, and as we have nothing particular to do with ours, — I dare-say I shan't see you again before I go to my aunt's in Berkeley Square.

"Very likely not," he said.

"And why not, Oswald?" asked his sister.

He passed his hand over his face before he answered her. "Because she and I run in different grooves now, and are not such meet play-fellows as we used to be once. Do you remember my taking you away right through Saulsbury Wood once on the old pony, and not bringing you back till tea-time, and Miss Blink going and telling my father?"

"Do I remember it? I think it was the happiest day in my life. His pockets were crammed full of gingerbread and Everton toffy, and we had three bottles of lemonade slung on to the pony's saddlebows. I thought it was a pity that we should ever come back."

"It was a pity," said Lord Chiltern.

"But, nevertheless, substantially necessary," said Lady Laura.

"Failing our power of reproducing the toffy, I suppose it was," said Violet.

"You were not Miss Effingham then," said Lord Chiltern.

"No, — not as yet. These disagreeable realities of life grow upon one; do they not? You took off my shoes and dried them for me at a woodman's cottage. I am obliged to put up with my maid's doing those things now. And Miss Blink the maid is changed for Lady Baldock the martinet. And if I rode about with you in a wood all day I should be sent to Coventry instead of to bed. And so you see everything is changed as well as my name."

"Everything is not changed," said Lord Chiltern, getting up from his seat. "I am not changed, — at least not in this, that as I then loved you better than any being in the world, — better even than Laura there, — so do I love you now infinitely the best of all. Do not look so surprised at me. You knew it before as well as you do now; — and Laura knows it. There is no secret to be kept in the matter among us three."

"But, Lord Chiltern," — said Miss Effingham, rising also to her feet, and then pausing, not knowing how to answer him. There had been a suddenness in his mode of addressing her which had, so to say, almost taken away her breath; and then to be told by a man of his love before his sister was in itself, to her, a matter so surprising, that none of those words came at her command which will come, as though by instinct, to young ladies on such occasions.

"You have known it always," said he, as though he were angry with her.

"Lord Chiltern," she replied, "you must excuse me if I say that you are, at the least, very abrupt. I did not think when I was going back so joyfully to our old childish days that you would turn the tables on me in this way."

"He has said nothing that ought to make you angry," said Lady Laura.

"Only because he has driven me to say that which will make me appear to be uncivil to himself. Lord Chiltern, I do not love you with that love of which you are speaking now. As an old friend I have always regarded you, and I hope that I may always do so." Then she got up and left the room.

"Why were you so sudden with her, — so abrupt, — so loud?" said his sister, coming up to him and taking him by the arm almost in anger.

"It would make no difference," said he. "She does not care for me."

"It makes all the difference in the world," said Lady Laura. "Such a woman as

Violet cannot be had after that fashion.
You must begin again."

"I have begun and ended," he said.

"That is nonsense. Of course you will persist. It was madness to speak in that way to-day. You may be sure of this, however, that there is no one she likes better than you. You must remember that you have done much to make any girl afraid of you.

"I do remember it."

"Do something now to make her fear you no longer. Speak to her softly. Tell her of the sort of life which you would live with her. Tell her that all is changed. As she comes to love you, she will believe you when she would believe no one else on that matter."

"Am I to tell her a lie?" said Lord Chiltern, looking his sister full in the face. Then he turned upon his heel and left her.

THE TURN OF THE YEAR.

I.

A GENTLE wind of western birth,
From some far sunnier sea,
Wakes daisies in the wintry earth,
Wakes thoughts of hope in me.

The sun is low ; the paths are wet,
And dance with frolic hail ;
The trees, whose spring-time is not yet,
Swing sighing in the gale.

Young gleams of sunshine peep and play ;
Thick vapours crowd between ;
'Tis strange that on a coming day
The earth will all be green.

The north wind blows, and blasts and raves,
And flaps his snowy wing :
Back ; toss thy bergs on arctic waves,
Thou canst not stay our spring.

II.

Up comes the primrose, wondering ;
The snowdrop droopeth by ;
The holy spirit of the spring
Is working silently.

Sweet-breathing odours gently wile
Earth's other children out ;
On nature's face a hopeful smile
Is flickering about.

When earth lay hard, unlovely, dull,
And life within her slept,
Above her heaven grew beautiful,
And forth her beauty crept ;

And though tears fall, as fall they will,
Smiles wander into sighs,
Yet if the sun keep shining still,
Her perfect day will rise.

III.

The sky is smiling over me,
. Hath smiled away the frost,
Clothed with young green the patient lea,
With buds the wood embossed.

The trees yet shut not out the sky,
It sees down to the flowers ;
They lift their beauty fearlessly,
They hide in leafy bower.

This day is yours, sweet birds ; sing on ;
The cold is all forgot ;
Ye had a dream, but it is gone :
Pain that is past, is not.

Joy that was past, is come again ;
And if the summer brings
New care, it is a loving pain,
That broods instead of sings.

IV.

Blow on me, wind, from west and south ;
Sweet summer-spirit, blow !
Come like a kiss from dear child's mouth,
Who knows not what I know.

The earth's perfection cometh soon ;
Ours lingereth alway ;
We have a spring-time, have a moon,
No sunny summer-day.

Rose sprinkled eve, gold-branded morn,
May still poor Nature's sighs ;
To us a higher hope is born —
We rest in that we rise.

But at the last a sapphire day
All over us will bow ;
And man's heart, full of sunlight, say,
"Lord, 'tis thy summer now."

— *Good Words.*

GEORGE MACDONALD.

From Macmillan's Magazine.

THE REIGN OF LAW.

Ἐρέπα μὲν ἡ τὸν ἐπορειών δόξα, ἔρέπα δὲ ἡ τὸν ἐπεισών—

The dawn went up the sky
Like any other day;
And they had only come
To mourn him where he lay.
“ We ne'er have seen the law
Reversed, 'neath which we lie;
Exceptions none are found,
And when we die, we die.
Resign'd to fact we wander hither;
We ask no more the whence and whither.

“ Vain questions! from the first
Put, and no answer found.
He binds us with the chain
Wherewith himself is bound.
From west to east the earth
Unrolls her primal curve;
The sun himself were vex'd
Did she one furlong swerve:
The myriad years have whirl'd her hither,
But tell not of the whence and whither.

“ We know but what we see —
Like cause, and like event;
One constant force runs on
Transmuted, but unspent:
Because they are, they are;
The mind may frame a plan,
'Tis from herself she draws
A special thought for man:
The natural choice that brought us hither
Is silent on the whence and whither.

“ Ah, which is likelier truth,
That law should hold its way,
Or, for this one of all,
Life reassert her sway?
Like any other morn
The sun goes up the sky;
No crisis marks the day,
For when we die, we die.
No fair fond hope allures us hither;
God's law is dumb on whence and whither.”

— Then wherefore are ye come?
Why weep a worn-out corse?
Why weep a ripple past
Down the long stream of force?
If life is that which keeps
Each organism whole,
No atom may be traced
Of what he thought the soul:
It had its term of passage hither,
But knew no whence, and knows no whither.

The forces that were Christ
Have ta'en new forms and fled;
The common sun goes up;
The dead are with the dead.
'Twas but a phantom life
That seem'd to think and will,
Evolving self and God
By some subjective skill;
That had its day of passage hither,
But knew no whence, and knows no whither.

If this be all in all;
Life, but one mode of force;
Law, but the plan which binds
The sequences in course;
All essence, all design
Shut out from mortal ken;
— We bow to Nature's fate,
And drop the style of men!
The summer dust the wind wafts hither
Is not more dead to whence and whither.

— But if our life be life,
And thought, and will, and love
Not vague unconscious airs
That o'er wild harp-strings move;
If consciousness be aught
Of all it seems to be,
And souls are something more
Than lights that gleam and flee;
Though dark the road that leads us thither,
The heart must ask its whence and whither.

To matter or to force
The All is not confined;
Beside the law of things
I set the law of mind;
One speaks in rock and star,
And one within the brain,
In unison at times,
And then apart again;
And both in one have brought us hither
That we may know our whence and whither.

The sequences of law
We learn through mind alone,
We see but outward forms,
The soul the one thing known: —
If she speak truth at all,
The voices must be true
That give these visible things,
These laws, their honour due,
But tell of one who brought us hither,
And holds the keys of whence and whither.

O shrine of God that now
Must learn itself with awe!
O heart and soul that move
Beneath a living law!

That which seem'd all the rule
 Of Nature, is but part ;
 A larger, deeper law.
 Claims also soul and heart.
 The force that framed and bore us hither
 Itself at once is whence and whither.

We may not hope to read
 Or comprehend the whole
 Or of the law of things
 Or of the law of soul :
 E'en in the eternal stars
 Dim perturbations rise,
 And all the searchers' search
 Does not exhaust the skies :

He who has framed and brought us hither
 Holds in his hands the whence and whither.

He in his science plans
 What no known laws foretell ;
 The wandering fires and fix'd
 Alike are miracle :
 The common death of all,
 • The life renew'd above,
 Are both within the scheme
 Of that all-circling love ;
 The seeming chance that cast us hither
 Accomplishes his whence and whither.

Then, though the sun go up
 His beaten azure way,
 God may fulfil his thought
 And bless his world to-day ;
 Beside the law of things
 The law of mind enthrone,
 And, for the hope of all,
 Reveal Himself in One ;
 Himself the way that leads us thither,
 The All-in-all, the Whence and Whither.

F. T. PALGRAVE.

From The Saturday Review.

SOCIAL CONDONATION.

OCCASIONALLY it happens that society is shocked by the revelation of a supposed moral blot in the past life of some man who has since made his way to fame and fortune, and to whom it is very unpleasant to have an attack made on the incidents of his own history. Some curious or malicious or indignant spectator at an awkward moment rakes aside a heap of ashes, and points out to the world, at the bottom of the heap, a transaction that has almost been forgotten. Very often the charge is a mistake or an exaggeration. But even if it were not, the public would be sorely perplexed to know how to treat so ancient and obsolete a de-

linquency. It seems ungenerous to go back through a series of years and to uncover sins which time has covered over. On the other hand, there is the great danger of letting pass, in the career of successful men, what would not so easily be forgiven in the career of their less successful contemporaries. Society, in spite of some misgivings, is usually on the side of mercy. It feels that there is such a thing about moral defects as the Statute of Limitations. Perhaps the offender may have repented of his early indiscretions ; at any rate it is certain that he must have suffered considerably from anxious apprehensions of exposure, if he has not actually suffered from a sort of virtuous remorse. About juvenile errors, in particular, people are naturally disposed to consider that it is for the interest of society to allow a *locus paenitentiae* to the culprit. His whole character may have been reformed during the interval. He may have become a useful member of the body politic or the body social, and there is something to be said in favour of holding out the prospect of oblivion to the weakness and follies of youth. A notable instance of the leniency of public opinion occurred not many years ago in the case of one of England's most remarkable statesmen. It was asserted by his enemies that he had been directly or indirectly concerned, a long time previously, in the mutilation of some public documents. The world at large showed a strong inclination to close their eyes and ears, and not even to examine into the charge. The broad answer given to his accusers was that twenty years had passed over the heads of all parties interested in the affair. And the question accordingly dropped out of memory again, and was very soon whirled back into obscurity amidst the rush and hurry of contemporary business. Some cynics even went so far as to say that, if lapse of time were not to be allowed to be a bar to subsequent investigations of official misconduct, nobody would be safe. Without adopting so despondent a view of the moral character of men in general, there is undoubtedly a sense in which it is true that the safety of individuals requires some limit of time to be assigned outside which they are not to be called upon to justify themselves against detractors. A charge which is brought against us at once, if it is unfounded, can be easily refuted. Not so an indictment which is allowed to stand for years, and which is subsequently excavated and forced into the light when half the actors in the business are dead and buried. The witnesses who

might have cleared the character of the accused are gone, and cannot be summoned to give evidence from the grave. If the inquiry, nevertheless, were to be insisted upon by society, innocent persons might be reduced to a situation of perplexity and of danger. Lapse of time cuts two ways. It enhances the difficulty of proving a case; it equally enhances the difficulty of disproving it.

The true reason why it is proper to regard with dislike the raking up of bygone scandal is that common sense tells us that such posthumous inquiries lead to plenty of suspicion and heart-burning, but to very little certainty. It is more satisfactory to say so at once than to take refuge in some unmeaning platitudes to the effect that delinquencies of old date should be forgotten. Once prove that they are delinquencies, and we do not feel at all sure that they ought to be forgotten. In the ordinary affairs of life no such veil is dropped over the detected misdeeds of dishonest men. We go on recollecting them and reverting to them as long as we live, and consider that a reputation for honour really lost can never be regained. Caesar's wife, once suspected, never can be Caesar's wife again. The criminal who stands at the bar of the Old Bailey knows well, or might know well if his experience were only wider, that discovered crime takes the bloom off a man's fortunes, just as it does off his conscience. The banker who makes away with the property of his clients may go to penal servitude, and exhaust the vengeance of the law; but he never can come home to resume his old position. Society scowls at him from behind its ledgers and prayer-books and fans. A cloud will always hang over his devoted head. The theory that legal punishment wipes out all recollections of the offence which has deserved it looks well in the pages of a philanthropic essay, but is totally at variance with the known tendencies of civilization. The law inflicts its sentence as a terror to the evil doer, and is satisfied when its sentence has been suffered; but society is not contented with any such measure of reprisal. It cannot afford, in self-defence, to receive into its friendly bosom any one who has once been expelled. Innocent and inexperienced persons have to be protected against the chance of corruption; society itself exists on a basis of mutual confidence; and confidence, which is a plant of slow growth in all cases, if once cut down by the roots, never grows again. In every profession and in every walk in life we claim the right of scrutinizing antece-

dents, of judging of the future of men and women, in a rough and ready way, by their past, and of guarding ourselves against converted sinners. It is of course desirable that this ostracizing disposition should be exercised with moderate severity, and that room should be left even to a reformed delinquent to try to get his living honestly, and to repair to a certain extent his errors. Yet the culprit finds that it is not in his power to take up his thread of life where he dropped it. He must not merely begin afresh, but begin at a disadvantage, and in a lower rank and station. If this be so, it is inconsistent to lay too much stress on the theory that undiscovered crimes should be condoned, merely because no one was astute enough at the moment to detect them. Successful hypocrisy or immunity does not alter the character of the original offence. There ought not to be different ways of judging the convict and the millionaire, the poor and the rich, the little and the great. The best and wisest method of considering cases of early misdemeanours is, not to assume that time acts as an obliteration of the fault, but to remember that time operates as a bar to inquiring successfully and thoroughly into the circumstances of the old affair. If detractors were allowed to lie by, and postpone for a generation or so their attacks on private character, the result would be frequently that infinite injustice would be done. It may be said that, in the case of legal offences, no such condonation is known to the law, and that thieves and murderers are often tried and punished long after their commission of the crime. This severity on the part of the English law is not really as great as it appears. Even in the case of criminal procedure lapse of time does operate as a barrier to protect the accused. It introduces the element of doubt, and no charge ever can be brought home to a man as long as reasonable doubt exists. Perhaps it would be more satisfactory if in the criminal law there were such a thing as a Statute of Limitations. Society, acting on different principles and for a different purpose, only introduces at a different stage of the inquiry the consideration which the law allows to come in before the inquiry is closed. As society is more sensitive and jealous than the law, and is concerned with suspicions rather than certainties, it is by no means an unfair or an unwise social principle to decline to enter on an examination of bygone affairs which cannot be safely or satisfactorily conducted, and which is likely in any case to do much damage even to innocent persons. On the

whole it is better, except in extreme and clear cases, to refrain from calling on a man to justify himself against ancient social scandal.

It is inevitable that the operation of such a rule should frequently allow of the escape of many men and women who cannot be said to deserve to escape at all. Of course they do and must escape, but it is more to the benefit of the body social that they should go undetected and unpunished than that social inquisition should be permitted after a long interval of years. In this fallible world we can only make general rules, nor is it possible to deal out impartial and infallible justice to everybody. Rough and ready justice is the law of life. Nobody can look around him and fail to perceive that the best justice of the world is served out in very rude earthen vessels. Do what we will, we cannot distribute social honours, positions, or fame on ideal principles. The wicked get on, and frequently faster than the good. The unscrupulous attorney or barrister rises to the top of the tree ; the merchant who sands his sugar ends his days in opulence and in comfort ; the immoral and the hypocritical die in the odour of sanctity and of reputation. This cannot be avoided. Big fishes devour little fishes, tares outgrow and choke the wheat, and excellent people are exposed to the necessity of seeing themselves distanced in the race by their inferiors in moral worth as well as in intellectual power. What, for example, can seem more at variance with our notion of abstract justice than that the children should suffer for the sins of their fathers ? Yet experience is full of such moral phenomena. Nobody ever comes in to the world on an absolutely fair level with his fellow-creatures. He begins at the starting-point where his father before him left off ; and, if absolute equality is the law of justice, justice is violated every time a child is born into the world. The child sets out with either some advantage or with some disadvantage as compared with those about him. It is sometimes said that, even if we were to reduce all society to the level of one vast flat plain, it would never remain in this condition, and before the end of a single lifetime we should have all the old inequalities again. There is a point beyond which the argument ceases to be worth anything ; for levelling is a question of degree, and the fact that inequalities will in any case be created fast enough by industry does not prove that it is desirable to create them by arbitrary legislation. One source of worldly inequality is, however, almost in-

evitable, unless indeed the State stepped in to assert its paramount rights over all children, and transferred all tutelary functions from the parents to itself. So long as the start in life of the younger generation depends upon the conduct and fortune of the generation before, nobody can say that good things and evil things are distributed throughout the world as our own ideas of justice would dictate. If then some men are punished far more lightly than others for misdeeds of precisely similar importance, if time in some cases obliterates, and in other cases does not obliterate, dishonourable actions, all that we can say is, that there is nothing in the fact at variance with the usual course of human affairs.

The way, indeed, in which the world at all times exercises its privilege of condoning offences against morality is arbitrary and uncertain. One cannot feel sure when it will strike the culprit hard and when it will let him off easily. Very often it forgives the soonest the man who himself exhibits the least consciousness of disgrace, and who has the courage to bear himself boldly and defiantly under the blow he has received. Of all things, it dislikes a cur the most. Spirit and resolution, like charity, cover a multitude of sins ; but meanness and pusillanimity are a cardinal blot upon character which neither women nor men ever forgive or forget. Singularly enough, the defects which society pardons with the greatest facility are not those which do it the least harm. It would be impossible to say that physical cowardice is as pernicious as moral, or that unchastity does not strike at the root of social progress far more than even moral cowardice. Fraud in a merchant or a lawyer is a more serious mischief than want of veracity in a soldier. Yet society, if we are to judge from the way it forgives, scarcely recognises the fact. It condones neither with reference to abstract rules of justice, nor with reference to its own better interests ; but it does, collectively and as a whole, pretty much what all of us do in our own individual cases — it condones so as to suit its personal comfort and its ease. It resents but moderately a proneness to yield to obvious temptation ; it does not require sublime sacrifices of self ; and it treats the failings of its members from a pleasant, easy-going, genial point of view. Condonation is accordingly a matter of favour rather than of justice or of right. And, as the world is constituted, favours fall to those who are planted in the path of favour. There is and ever will be a general inclination to let

down easily people who have friends, and to be fearless and merciless to those who have none. Of course it is very sad that it should be so, but it is not sadder than many other things in life; and after all it is indubitably true, as we read in the Bible, that one sinner has never any right to complain of the bounty extended to another. The only real standard by which condonation of any kind is to be tested is the consideration whether sterner or stricter reckonings would not purify and raise the social body. And, if one thing more than another is clear, it is that it is the interest of society to appear to condone hastily rather than to sanction the notion that charges can be satisfactorily dealt with if they are kept till they are stale.

"LADY'S CHAIN."

"Petticoats are to be longer than last year, and are to be held up by chains of ebony, fastened to the waist by steel locks. Large and heavy brass rings are to be suspended by chains from the waist behind." — *La Follie*.

WHY ebony fettters, steel locks,
And brass rings hung from chains round the
waist,
For the belles who dog Fashion, as flocks
On the track of the bell-wether haste ?

Is't that Fashion's fair slaves, not content
With paging their hard tyrant's heels,
To lackey her triumph are sent,
Thus chained to *La Mode's* chariot-wheels ?

"Twixt "hung-man" and "hang-man" confu-
sion
Results, when the practice obtains,
To have charms that should *do* execution,
Made to suffer it, thus "hung in chains."

"Chain-mail" in old time kept the field ;
Must "chain-female" now find its abettors,
Till to "Chaine des Dames," all figures yield,
And all *pas-seuls* are hornpipes in fettters ?

Or is it that Fashion, run frantic,
Thus expiates failure of brains,
As, when lunacy dared to be antic,
In old times, 'twas clapped into chains ?

But as now our instruction is bettered,

And we treat the insane with compassion,
When no other lunatic's fettered,
Why in chains bind the poor fools of Fashion ?

Now *jupes*, we see, closely must sit,
En fourreau from the waist to the feet,
And what can strait petticoats fit
So well as strait waistcoats, *en suite* ?

Then let Fashion her edict send forth,
Through the allies of Vanity Fair,
That her lieges, East, West, South, and North,
Chains may drop, if strait waistcoats they'll
wear.

— *Punch*.

KANGAROOS. — The kangaroos are so multiplying in the neighbourhood of Greelong, that great battues have been recently organized, in three of which alone 4,000 kangaroos were captured and knocked on the head. The plan is to set up great stockades too high for the kangaroos to jump over, and lead to the mouth of these stockades by widely diverging stockade alleys, into which the kangaroos are driven by horsemen formed in a semicircle. In one of these battues, however, the poor creatures discovered the trap, and had the pluck to turn back in a large body, so that several hundreds forced their way out in spite of the hunters, and escaped. The scene on this occasion must have been very exciting, the kangaroos dodging grotesquely about in all directions, the baby-kangaroos (called joeys), which had been ejected from the mothers' pouches, skipping helplessly in the crowd, and the horsemen galloping, shouting, cracking their whips, and endeavouring to head the columns of retreating kangaroos. None of the skins nor any of the flesh seems to have been saved for sale, though the skins sometimes fetch 17s. a dozen, and the hind-quarters and tails are said to make such delicious soup as to be worth preserving and sending to England for our dinner-tables. Two kangaroos are said to eat as much grass as three sheep, hence this St. Bartholomew's Day of Kangaroos. — *Spectator*.